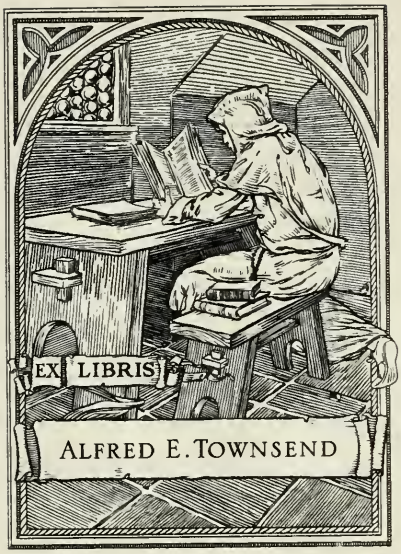

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THE WANDERING JEW

The Works of Eugene Sue

ILLUSTRATED
WITH
ORIGINAL ETCHINGS

In Twenty Volumes

Volume X.

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PART VII. — CONTINUED
THE PROTECTOR

THE WANDERING JEW.

CHAPTER I.

INSIDIOUS COUNSELS.

Adrienne de Cardoville had been confined in the house of Doctor Baleinier more strictly than ever since the united nocturnal attempt of Agricola and Dagobert, in which the soldier, though severely wounded, had contrived, thanks to the intrepidity of Agricola, aided by the heroic Killjoy, to regain the little door of the convent garden, and escape by the outer boulevard, with the young smith.

Four o'clock had struck, and Adrienne, since the preceding day, had been conducted into a chamber in the second story of the *Maison de Santé*, where a grated window, protected by an outside screen, only allowed a feeble light to penetrate the apartment.

The young lady, since her conversation with La Mayeux, expected to be delivered very speedily, through the intervention of her friends; but she experienced very great uneasiness with respect to Agricola and Dagobert. Knowing actually nothing of the result of the struggle which had taken place on the night in question, between her would-be liberator and the people belonging to the

lunatic asylum and the convent, it was in vain she inquired of her keepers; they would not even reply to her interrogatories.

These fresh incidents still more increased the bitter resentment which Adrienne entertained against the Princesse de Saint-Dizier, the Père d'Aigrigny, and their creatures.

The slight paleness of the lovely face of Mlle. de Cardoville, her beautiful eyes, which appeared somewhat wearied, betrayed her recent anguish. Seated at a small table, with her head resting on one of her hands, and half hidden in the long tresses of her golden hair, she was turning over the leaves of a book, when the door suddenly opened and M. Baleinier entered.

The doctor, a Jesuit of the "short gown," the docile and passive instrument of the will of his Order, was not, as we have said, but half in the confidence of Père d'Aigrigny and the Princesse de Saint-Dizier. He was ignorant of the purpose of Mlle. de Cardoville's being immured; he was also ignorant of the abrupt change of position which had taken place on the previous day between Père d'Aigrigny and Rodin, after the reading of the will of Marius de Rennepont. The doctor had only received on the previous evening an order from Père d'Aigrigny (then obeying the instructions of Rodin) to shut up Mlle. de Cardoville still more closely, and to redouble his severity towards her; and to endeavour, in fact, to compel her (by what means we shall presently show) to renounce her intention of prosecuting her persecutors hereafter.

At the sight of the doctor Mlle. de Cardoville could not conceal the aversion and disdain with which this man inspired her.

M. Baleinier, on the contrary, always smiling, always bland, approached Adrienne with perfect ease and self-possession, and then stepped a few paces from her as if to examine the young lady's features attentively; and

he then said, as if he had been satisfied with the observation which he had made :

" Well, well ! The terrible events of the night before last have not had so bad an effect as I feared ; the air better, the complexion is more settled, the gesture more composed, the eyes are still too animated, but no longer with that distressing lustre. You were going on so well, — now the cure will be delayed, for the unfortunate transaction of the night before last has excited you more terribly than you yourself can believe ; but, luckily, by great care, your restoration will not, I trust, be thrown back for any indefinite period."

Although somewhat accustomed to the audacity of the brother of the Order, Mlle. de Cardoville could not help saying, with a smile of bitter disdain :

" What a barefaced probity is yours, sir ! What effrontery in your zeal to gain your money fairly ! Never for a moment without your mask, — always with the trick, the falsehood on your lips. Really, if this disgraceful farce is as fatiguing to you as it is disgusting and contemptible in my eyes, you are not half paid for your labour."

" Alas ! " said the doctor, in an accent of regret ; " always this distressing idea that you have no occasion for our attentions, — that I am acting a farce when I talk to you of the distressing state in which you were when we were compelled to bring you here without your consent. But, except this little proof of rebellious insanity, your position is marvellously ameliorated ; you are going on towards a perfect cure. Hereafter your excellent heart will do me justice, and one day I shall be appreciated as I ought to be."

" You are right, sir ! Yes, the day is at hand when you will ' be appreciated as you ought to be ! ' " responded Adrienne, with emphasis.

" Always that one fixed idea ! " said the doctor, with a kind of commiseration. " Come, come, be

reasonable! Think no more of such childish imaginings."

"Give up my right and intention to appeal to the tribunal for reparation to myself and retribution for you and your accomplices? Never, sir! Oh, never!"

"Very good!" said the doctor, shrugging his shoulders; "once out of here, *Dieu merci!* you will have other things to think of, my charming enemy."

"You are generous enough to forget the wrong you do; but I, sir, have a better memory."

"Let us talk seriously. Have you really the idea of applying to the tribunal?" asked Doctor Baleinier, in a serious tone.

"Yes, sir! And you know what I decide upon I decide upon with resolution."

"Well, then, I beg of you, I entreat you, not to follow up that intention," added the doctor, in a most emphatic tone; "I ask it of you as a favour, and for the sake of your own interest."

"I think, sir, that you are somewhat confounding your interests with mine!"

"Let us see now," said Doctor Baleinier, with assumed impatience, and as if he was assured of convincing Mlle. de Cardoville, "now would you really have the mistaken courage to plunge into despair two persons filled with nobleness of heart and generosity of conduct?"

"Only two? The jest would be more complete if you would say three. Yourself, sir, my aunt, and the Abbé d'Aigrigny; for these are, no doubt, the generous personages in whose name you invoke my pity."

"Really, mademoiselle, I did not allude to myself, or your aunt, or the Abbé d'Aigrigny?"

"To whom else, then, did you refer, sir?" said Mlle. de Cardoville, with surprise.

"I referred to two poor devils who, no doubt, sent by those you call your friends, obtained an entrance the other night into the adjacent convent, and came from

thence into this garden. The reports you heard were shots fired at them."

"Alas! I was afraid it was so; and they refused to tell me whether or not they were wounded," said Adrienne, with painful emotion.

"One of them was wounded, though only slightly; for he contrived to keep on his legs and get away from the persons who pursued him."

"Heaven be praised!" exclaimed Mlle. de Cardoville, clasping her hands fervently.

"Nothing can be more praiseworthy than your joy on learning that they have escaped; but then by what strange contradiction would you now set justice on their heels? That is a singular mode, really, to acknowledge their devotion to your service!"

"What do you mean, sir?" inquired Mlle. de Cardoville.

"For if they are apprehended," continued Doctor Baleinier, not appearing to notice the question, "as they were unquestionably guilty of escalade with forcible entry during the night, they will be assuredly sentenced to the galleys."

"Heaven! and for me?"

"It would be for you, and, what is worse, through you, that they would be thus sentenced."

"Through me, sir?"

"Certainly, if you follow out your intentions of vengeance against your aunt and the Père d'Aigrigny (I do not think of myself, for I am quite protected); if, in a word, you persist in your determination to appeal to the law for having been unjustly immured in this house."

"Sir, I do not understand you — explain yourself!" said Adrienne, with increasing uneasiness.

"Why, child as you are," exclaimed the Jesuit of the short robe, with an impressive tone, "do you think, then, that when justice is once set on the track of an affair, that its course can be checked and its power directed as

one will, and when one chooses? When you leave this abode, you will lodge your complaint against me and your family. Is it not so? Well, what will follow? Why, justice will take the affair up, obtain every information, summon witnesses, and enter into all the most minute investigations. What will then result? Why, let this nocturnal escalade, which the superior of the convent has a certain interest in keeping quiet for fear of scandal, let this nocturnal attempt, I say,— which I, for my part, do not desire to have brought before the public, — be once openly divulged, and as there is mixed up with it a very grave offence which incurs a disgraceful punishment, why, justice will then take the initiative, and set its agents on the pursuit of these offenders; and if, as is probable, they are still in Paris, detained by any duties, or by their business, or under the idea that they are in perfect security (which they may believe, thinking that they have only acted on an honourable motive), they will be found and arrested; and who will have provoked their apprehension? Why you, yourself, by deposing against us."

"Ah, sir, that would be horrible — it is impossible —"

"On the contrary, it would be very possible," said M. Baleinier; "and so, whilst I and the superior of the convent, who, after all, have the only right to complain, desire nothing but to keep this annoying affair perfectly quiet, it is you — you, for whom these poor fellows have risked the galleys — you who will hand them over to justice."

Although Mlle. de Cardoville was not completely the dupe of the Jesuit of the short robe, she guessed that the sentiments of clemency which he pretended to use towards Dagobert and his son would be absolutely regulated by the part she might take in prosecuting or abandoning the legitimate vengeance which she desired to obtain from the law.

In fact, Rodin, whose instructions the doctor followed,

although unconscious of it, was too cunning to say to Mlle. de Cardoville, "If you attempt any quest of justice, Dagobert and his son shall be denounced," whilst they could arrive at the same end by inspiring Adrienne with such fears as to her two liberators as would turn her from her purpose. Without being at all acquainted with the real law of the case, Mlle. de Cardoville had too much good sense not to see that Dagobert and Agricola might, indeed, be very greatly injured in consequence of their nocturnal attempt, and thus be involved in most terrible consequences.

Yet, when she reflected on all she had suffered in this house, and turning over all the just resentments which had accumulated in the depths of her heart, Adrienne found it a bitter task to renounce the deep pleasure of unmasking and exposing all the vile machinations in the face of open day.

Doctor Baleinier looked at her, whom he believed his dupe, with crafty attention, quite assured that he penetrated the cause of her silence and hesitation.

"But, sir," she resumed, without being able quite to conceal her trouble, "admitting that I should be disposed, from some motive or other, not to lodge any complaint, or begin an action at law — to forget the evil that has been heaped upon me, when shall I leave this house?"

"I cannot answer that question, for I am unable to decide on the period when you will be radically cured," said the doctor, with a benignant smile; "you are on the highroad thither, but — "

"Still this insolent and absurd farce," exclaimed Mlle. de Cardoville, indignantly interrupting the doctor. "I ask you, and, if it be necessary, I beg of you to tell me how much time longer I shall be immured in this horrible abode? For I am to quit it some day or other, I suppose."

"Certainly — assuredly — I hope so," replied the Jesuit of the short robe, with an air of apparent regret;

"but I cannot say precisely when. Besides, I must tell you frankly that every precaution has been taken to prevent any repetition of such attempts as we had the night before last. The most rigorous watch has been established, in order that you may not have any communication out-of-doors; and this is all done for your good, and that your poor head may not be excited again so dangerously —"

"Thus, then, sir," said Adrienne, almost affrighted, "the days I have spent here may be considered as days of liberty in comparison with those which are now in store for me?"

"Your benefit is the first consideration," replied the doctor, with an affectionate air.

Mlle. de Cardoville, feeling the inutility of her indignation and despair, heaved a bitter sigh, and hid her face in her hands.

At this instant rapid steps were heard without, and one of the women keepers entered, after having knocked at the door.

"Sir," she said, with a frightened look, "there are two gentlemen down-stairs who demand to see you and this young lady."

Adrienne raised her head; her eyes were bathed in tears.

"What are the names of these persons?" inquired Doctor Baleinier, greatly astonished.

"One of them told me," answered the keeper, "to say to monsieur the doctor that he was a magistrate, and had come here to execute a judicial duty concerning Mlle. de Cardoville."

"A magistrate!" exclaimed the Jesuit of the short robe, becoming purple, and unable to repress his surprise and disquietude.

"Oh, Heaven be praised!" exclaimed Adrienne, rising quickly, and her face beaming with hope through her tears. "My friends have been warned, and the hour of justice is at hand."

"Beg these persons to come up-stairs," said Doctor Baleinier to the keeper, after a moment's reflection.

Then, with his countenance more and more moved and troubled, the Jesuit of the short robe went towards Adrienne with a severe and almost threatening look, which contrasted strangely with his habitual placidity and hypocritical smile, and said, in a low tone:

"Take care, mademoiselle, do not congratulate yourself too soon."

"I do not fear you now!" replied Mlle. de Cardoville, with her eye lighted up and radiant with hope. "M. de Montbron, no doubt, has returned to Paris, and has been informed; it is he who is accompanied by the magistrate, and he comes to free me!"

Then Adrienne added, in a tone of bitter irony:

"I pity you, sir, — you and your friends."

"Mademoiselle," exclaimed M. Baleinier, unable to conceal his increasing trepidation, "I repeat, take care, remember what I have said to you, — your complaint will necessarily include, you understand necessarily, the revelation of all that transpired the other night; take care, the fate, the honour of the soldier and his son are in your hands, — reflect, they have the galleys before them."

"Oh, I am not your dupe, sir; you threaten me covertly; have the courage to tell me that if I complain to this magistrate you will instantly denounce the soldier and his son."

"I repeat that, if you commence your complaint, those persons are utterly lost," replied the lay Jesuit, in ambiguous terms.

A good deal disturbed by the real danger which there might be in the threats of the doctor, Adrienne exclaimed:

"But, then, sir, if this magistrate interrogates me, do you think I will utter a falsehood?"

"You will reply, and tell the truth. Besides," said

M. Baleinier, in rapid tones, in the hope of achieving his purpose; "you will reply that you were in such an excited state of mind for some days that it was thought advisable, for your health's sake, to conduct you hither without apprising you, but that now you are infinitely better, and are fully convinced of the utility of the precautions that were taken for your benefit. I will confirm all this; for, after all, it is the truth."

"Never!" exclaimed Mlle. de Cardoville, indignantly. "I will never be the accomplice of so infamous a falsehood. I will never so degrade myself as to justify the indignities under which I suffered so painfully."

"Here is the magistrate," said Doctor Baleinier, hearing a noise outside the door, "and now, take care —"

The door opened at this moment; and, to the utter astonishment of the doctor, Rodin appeared, accompanied by a man dressed in black, and of a lofty and stern demeanour.

Rodin, for the sake of working out his plans, and from the deepest motives of prudence (which we shall reveal hereafter), far from informing Père d'Aigrigny and the doctor of his unexpected visit, which he intended to pay at the *Maison de Santé*, attended by a magistrate, had, on the contrary, on the previous evening, as we know, given an order to Doctor Baleinier to confine Mlle. de Cardoville still more strictly.

We must imagine the increase of the doctor's astonishment when he saw the officer of justice, whose unexpected presence and imposing aspect already greatly disquieted him, when he saw him enter, accompanied by Rodin, the humble and obscure secretary of the Abbé d'Aigrigny.

As they entered the door, Rodin, still meanly dressed, had, with a gesture at once compassionate and respectful, pointed out Mlle. de Cardoville to the magistrate. Then, whilst the latter, who could not repress a movement of admiration at the sight of Adrienne's exceeding

beauty, seemed to examine her with as much surprise as interest, the Jesuit humbly retired a few paces into the background.

Doctor Baleinier, in perfect amaze, and hoping to make Rodin understand him, made several signs of intelligence to him, endeavouring to interrogate him as to the unexpected arrival of the magistrate.

Another subject of surprise for Doctor Baleinier: Rodin did not appear to recognise him, nor to understand his expressive pantomime, but gazed at him in affected wonder.

At length the doctor, out of all patience, redoubled his mute interrogatories; and then, Rodin advancing a step, stretched out his bent neck towards him, and said, in a very loud voice:

"What is it you want to say to me, M. le Docteur?"

At these words, which completely disconcerted Baleinier, and which broke the silence which had reigned for some seconds, the magistrate turned around, and Rodin added, with the most imperturbable *sang-froid:*

"Since we came in M. le Docteur has been making all sorts of mysterious signs to me. I imagine that he has something very particular to communicate to me; but, as I have no secrets, I beg he will be so good as explain out loud what he means."

This reply, so embarrassing to Doctor Baleinier, pronounced in an offensive tone, and accompaned by a look of icy coldness, again plunged the doctor into astonishment so great that for several moments he was wholly unable to reply.

Unquestionably the magistrate was struck by this fact, and the silence that followed, for he threw on Doctor Baleinier a look of extreme severity.

Mlle. de Cardoville, who had expected to see M. de Montbron enter, remained also in a state of extreme surprise.

CHAPTER II.

THE ACCUSER.

Doctor Baleinier, for a moment disconcerted by the unexpected presence of a magistrate, and the inexplicable conduct of Rodin, soon resumed his *sang-froid*, and thus addressed his brother of the short robe:

"If I endeavoured to make myself understood by signs, it was because, whilst desirous of showing my respect for the silence which this gentlemen (and he looked towards the magistrate) has kept since he entered my house, I wished also to testify my surprise at a visit with which I did not expect to be honoured."

"It is to this young lady that I am to explain the motive of my silence, sir, whilst I will beg her to excuse me," replied the magistrate, and bowing slightly to Adrienne, he continued to address her. "I have had much before me, mademoiselle, in your name; so very serious a charge, that I could not help remaining for an instant mute and observant in your presence, endeavouring to read in your countenance, your attitude, if the accusation deposed to in my presence was founded in truth; and I have now every reason to give the fullest credit to it."

"May I then know, sir," inquired Doctor Baleinier, in a tone, firm, but perfectly polite, "to whom I have the honour of addressing myself?"

"Sir, I am *juge d'instruction;* and I came here to do my duty in a matter to which my attention has been seriously directed."

"Will you, sir, deign to explain yourself to me?" asked the doctor, with a bow.

"Sir," answered the magistrate, whose name was M. de Gernande, a man about fifty years of age, of firm mind and upright principles, and who knew perfectly how to unite the austere duties of his office with the most gentlemanly politeness, — "sir, you are accused of having committed a very gross error, not to make use of a more severe expression. As to the nature of this error, I should rather prefer to believe that you, sir, one of the princes of science, have been completely deceived in your medical opinion, than suspect you of having forgotten all that is most sacred in the exercise of a profession which is almost sacerdotal — "

"When, sir, you have specified the facts," responded the Jesuit of the short robe, with a certain hauteur, "it will be easy for me to prove that my scientific conscience, as as well as my conscience as an honest man, is free from the slightest reproach."

"Mademoiselle," said M. de Gernande, addressing Adrienne, "is it true that you were conducted to this house by stratagem?"

"Sir," exclaimed M. Baleinier, "allow me to observe that the way in which you put that question reflects painfully on me."

"Sir, it is to mademoiselle that I have the honour now to address myself," replied M. de Gernande, sternly; "and I am the only judge of the suitability of my questions."

Adrienne was about to reply in the affirmative to the magistrate's question when an expressive look from Doctor Baleinier reminded her that, perhaps, she should thereby expose Dagobert and his son to a vindictive prosecution.

It was no low and common feeling of vengeance which animated Adrienne, but a legitimate indignation against the most hateful hypocrisy; she would have thought it

cowardly not to unmask this; but desirous to conciliate, if possible, she said to the magistrate, in a voice full of sweetness and dignity:

"Sir, allow me in my turn to ask you a question."

"By all means, mademoiselle."

"Shall you consider the reply I make as a formal denunciation?"

"I am here, mademoiselle, to discover the truth under all circumstances, — no consideration should induce you to endeavour to conceal it for an instant."

"Assuredly not, sir," replied Adrienne; "but, suppose that, having just grounds of complaint, I expose them to you in order to obtain your authority for leaving this abode, shall I hereafter be free not to follow up the charges I may now bring before you?"

"You may unquestionably abandon such charges, mademoiselle, but justice will take up your cause in the name of society at large, if it has been maltreated in your person."

"Would forgiveness then be denied me, sir? A contemptuous forgetfulness of the ills I have suffered would surely adequately avenge me."

"You may concede your personal forgiveness and forgetfulness, mademoiselle; but I have the honour to repeat to you that society cannot evince the same indulgence under the certainty that you have been the victim of a culpable machination; and I have every fear that such has been the case. The manner in which you express yourself, the generosity of your expressions, the calmness, the dignity of your attitude, — all combine to make me believe that the truth has been deposed to before me."

"I hope, sir," interposed Doctor Baleinier, who had now resumed all his habitual phlegm, "that you will, at least, inform me by whom this deposition was made."

"It has been affirmed to me, sir," replied the mag-

istrate, in a tone of severity, "that mademoiselle was conducted hither by stratagem."

"By stratagem?"

"Yes, sir."

"It is true that mademoiselle was conducted hither by stratagem," replied the Jesuit of the short robe, after a moment's pause.

"You assent to it," said M. de Gernande.

"I do, sir; I confess that I employed a means which we are unfortunately compelled to resort to when the persons who have need of our cures have not the consciousness of their sad state."

"But, sir," said the magistrate, "it is asserted, in my presence, that Mlle. de Cardoville never had any need of your cures."

"That is a question of legal medicine, in which the law alone is not called upon to decide, sir, and which must be examined into, and debated in all its bearings," said Doctor Baleinier, with all his usual assurance.

"The question can't, in effect, be more seriously debated, inasmuch as you are charged with having immured Mlle. de Cardoville here, although she was not in perfect possession of all her reason."

"And may I ask for what end?" said Doctor Baleinier, with a slight shrug of the shoulders, and in an ironical tone; "for what purpose could I have committed such an indignity, admitting, for an instant, that my reputation does not place me above such an odious and absurd accusation?"

"You may have acted, sir, with the purpose of favouring a family plot got up against Mlle. de Cardoville with an avaricious design."

"And who, sir, has dared to make so calumnious an accusation?" exclaimed Doctor Baleinier, with wrathful indignation. "Who has had the audacity to accuse a respectable man — and I will add, respected by all —

of having been an accomplice in such an infamous transaction?"

"I did," said Rodin, calmly.

"You!" exclaimed Doctor Baleinier; and, recoiling two or three steps, he seemed as though thunderstruck.

"Yes, it is I who accuse you," responded Rodin, in a sharp, clear voice.

"Yes, it was this gentleman who, this very morning, armed with adequate proofs, came to demand my intervention in favour of Mlle. de Cardoville," said the magistrate, who retreated a step, that Adrienne might perceive her defender.

During this scene Rodin's name had not yet been mentioned. Mlle. de Cardoville had often heard speak of the secretary of the Abbé d'Aigrigny in terms of obloquy, but, never having seen him, she was ignorant that her liberator was no other than this Jesuit; and she, therefore, looked at him with a glance mingled with curiosity, surprise, interest, and gratitude.

The cadaverous countenance of Rodin, his repulsive ugliness, his sordid attire, would, some days before, have excited in Adrienne a disgust, perhaps, unconquerable; but the young girl, remembering that La Mayeux, poor, mean, deformed, and clad in rags, was endowed, in spite of her unprepossessing exterior, with one of the noblest hearts that can beat in a human bosom, — this recollection was singularly favourable to the Jesuit, — Mlle. de Cardoville forgot that he was ugly and squalid, and only saw that he was old, seemed poor, and came to rescue her.

Doctor Baleinier, in spite of his craft, in spite of his bold-faced hypocrisy, in spite of his presence of mind, could not disguise the extent to which Rodin's denunciation affected him; and he was quite bewildered when he remembered that it was the implacable directions of Rodin, through the wicket of the chamber, which had prevented him — him, Baleinier — from yielding to the

pity with which the despairing anguish of this unhappy young lady, who almost doubted herself of her own security, had inspired him.

And it was he, Rodin — he, so inexorable — he, the attendant demon, the devoted subaltern of Père d'Aigrigny, who denounced the doctor, and brought the magistrate to obtain the release of Adrienne, when, the evening previous, Père d'Aigrigny had again commanded him to redouble his severity towards her!

The Jesuit of the short robe persuaded himself that Rodin betrayed the Père d'Aigrigny most infamously, and that the friends of Mlle. de Cardoville had corrupted and seduced the miserable secretary; and then Doctor Baleinier, exasperated at what he considered as base treachery, exclaimed again, with indignation, and in a voice half choked with rage:

"It is you, sir, who have dared thus to accuse me — you, who but a few days since — "

Then, reflecting that to accuse Rodin as an accomplice was to accuse himself, he assumed an air of excessive emotion, and continued with bitterness:

"Ah, sir, sir! You are the last person I should have thought capable of preferring so shameful a denunciation; it is infamous."

"And who better than myself could denounce such infamy?" said Rodin, in an abrupt and harsh tone. "Was I not in a position to learn, but unfortunately too late, the machinations by which Mlle. de Cardoville and others had been the victims? What, then, was my duty as an honest man? To inform the worshipful magistrate and prove to him what I advanced by accompanying him hither; and this is what I have done."

"Then, *monsieur le magistrat*," resumed Doctor Baleinier, "it is not only myself whom this man accuses, but he dares also to accuse besides — "

"I accuse M. l'Abbé d'Aigrigny," interrupted Rodin, in a loud and piercing voice; "I accuse Madame de

Saint-Dizier; I accuse you, sir, — you, sir, of having, from base and interested motives, immured Mlle. de Cardoville in this house, and the daughters of M. le Maréchal Simon in the adjacent convent. Is this clear?"

"Alas! it is but too true," said Adrienne, with energy. "I have seen the poor, unhappy girls, who made signs to me of their deep despair."

The accusation of Rodin relative to the orphan girls was a fresh and formidable blow for Doctor Baleinier. He was then thoroughly convinced that the traitor had completely passed over to the enemy's camp. Being, therefore, desirous to put an end to his embarrassing position, he said to the magistrate, endeavouring to assume as good a countenance as he could, in spite of his deep emotion:

"I might, sir, confine myself to silence, and thus evince my contempt for such charges, until a judicial investigation shall have stamped them with some authority; but, strong in the rectitude of my conscience, I address myself to Mlle. de Cardoville herself, and I entreat her to say if, even this very morning, I did not announce to her that her health would soon be in so satisfactory a state that she might leave this house. I adjure mademoiselle, by her well-known sincerity, to answer me if such was not my language; and if, when I said so, I was not alone with her, and if — "

"Ah, come, sir!" said Rodin, insolently interrupting Baleinier. "Suppose this dear young lady avows this from pure generosity, what does that prove in your favour? Nothing at all — "

"What, sir!" exclaimed the doctor. "Do you venture — "

"I venture to unmask you without asking your leave. It is unpleasant, no doubt; but what does all you have just said amount to? Why, that, alone with Mlle. de Cardoville, you have spoken to her as if she were really insane! *Parbleu!* That is very conclusive, really!"

"But, sir — " said the doctor.

"But, sir," interrupted Rodin, without allowing him to continue, "it is evident that, in anticipation of what happened, and has happened to-day, in order to have a hole to creep out of, you feigned to be persuaded of your execrable falsehood, even in the presence of this poor young lady, in order that hereafter, if requisite, you might appeal to the fact of your assumed conviction on the point. Come, come! It is not people of right mind and good hearts who bind themselves to such statements or such transactions."

"Really, sir — " exclaimed Baleinier, much exasperated.

"Really, sir," said Rodin, in a still louder voice, and which completely drowned the doctor's; "is it true, or is it not, that you hold in reserve the evasion of throwing this infamous immurement on a scientific error? I say yes; and I add, that you think yourself out of the scrape, because you now say, 'Thanks to my cures, mademoiselle has recovered her reason; what more is there required?'"

"I affirm that, sir, and I maintain it."

"You maintain a falsehood; for it is proved that the reason of mademoiselle was never, for an instant, deranged."

"And I, sir, maintain that the reason of Mlle. de Cardoville was completely impaired."

"I am prepared to prove the contrary," answered Rodin.

"You!" exclaimed the doctor. "And by what means can you do that?"

"Excuse me there!" replied Rodin, with an ironical smile. "You will perfectly understand my reasons for being silent at present." Then, assuming an indignant air, he added, "It reflects no small disgrace on you, however, sir, to have permitted the discussion of such a subject in the presence of this young lady. She might

well have been spared this fresh trial to her feelings."

"Sir!"

"I say again, sir, shame on you for permitting this poor lady to be pained and harassed by so distressing a conversation. Your conduct is alike unmanly and improper, whether you speak the words of truth or falsehood."

"This is past all endurance!" exclaimed the Jesuit of the short robe, exasperated beyond all further restraint. "And I can but accuse that gentleman (pointing to the magistrate) of undue partiality in permitting me to be assailed by such gross and calumnious assertions."

"I beg your pardon, sir!" answered M. de Gernande, sternly. "I am perfectly acquainted with the duties I have to perform, and that I am required, by virtue of my office, not only to permit, but even to provoke, controversy and dispute in argument, the better to arrive at the truth of the affair. It appears to me, even by your own confession, that in whatever state the mind of Mlle. de Cardoville may have been, she is now, at least, sufficiently restored to health, whether of body or mind, to be permitted to quit this establishment immediately."

"Why," said the doctor, hesitatingly, "I certainly see no positive reason against it; what I insist on is that the cure is not sufficiently confirmed, and that I must totally decline being answerable for what may occur."

"Be under no apprehension, sir, I beseech you," said Rodin, "as to any future responsibility attaching itself to you. It is scarcely possible, after the specimens this poor young lady has had of your skill and integrity, she will be induced to trust either her bodily or mental ailments in your hands."

"I have, therefore, no occasion to employ my official authority to compel you to afford immediate egress to Mlle. de Cardoville," said the magistrate to the doctor.

"The young lady is free to depart whenever she

pleases," answered Baleinier; "perfectly so, as far as I am concerned."

"As for the question of your having unduly and unjustly immured the lady under a false charge of madness, that will be duly investigated; the affair being in the hands of the judicial authorities, you will have every opportunity of clearing yourself from so foul a charge."

"I am under no fears, sir, as to the result of such an investigation," said Doctor Baleinier, affecting a calm and composed mien. "My conscience exculpates me from all blame, and I rather court inquiry than shun it."

"I trust it may prove so," said M. de Gernande; "for, however appearances may be against persons, more especially those occupying a position of such eminence as yours, we are always truly rejoiced when they can satisfactorily prove their innocence." Then, addressing Adrienne, he said, "I can well understand, mademoiselle, how painful such a scene as the present must be both to your generosity and delicacy. It will be optional with you either to institute a civil process against Doctor Baleinier, or to allow justice to take its course. One word more: that noble-hearted individual," pointing to Rodin, "who has so fearlessly and disinterestedly espoused your cause, intimated to me that he had every reason to believe you would wish to take immediate charge of the daughters of M. le Maréchal Simon; and I am now going to demand them from the convent, whither they, also, were conveyed under a feigned pretext."

"Indeed, sir," replied Adrienne, "from the moment I first learnt of the arrival of Maréchal Simon's daughters in Paris, my first impulse was to offer to receive them beneath my roof. These young ladies are my nearest relatives, and it would be at once my duty and pleasure to treat them in every respect as though they were my sisters. I shall, therefore, feel my obligations to you

doubly great, if you will permit them to be entrusted to my care."

"It appears to me," replied M. de Gernande, "that, independently of my desire to meet your wishes, my dear young lady, I can in no way better secure the happiness and the best interests of your young relatives." Then, addressing Doctor Baleinier, he said, "Have you any objection, sir, to my bringing the Mlles. Simon here? If not, I will fetch them while Mlle. de Cardoville is preparing for her departure. They can then accompany their kind friend and relative, and all return together."

"I beg Mlle. de Cardoville will make use of this house as though it were her own while awaiting her friends; upon their arrival my carriage shall be at her disposal, to conduct her wherever she pleases."

"Mademoiselle," said the magistrate, approaching Adrienne, "without in any way prejudging the question, which will shortly be brought before the courts of law, I may, at least, express my regret at not having been applied to sooner on your behalf. I might have spared you some days of cruel suffering, for I can well imagine how much you must have had to endure."

"One happy recollection," said Adrienne, with graceful dignity, "will remain, even of these days of sorrow and suffering, that of the generous part you have taken in my case; for which I trust to thank you more fully when again beneath my own roof, and to assure you of my lasting sense, not only of the justice you have accorded me, but also for the benevolent, I would even venture to say paternal, manner in which you have performed the service; and I trust, sir," added Mlle. de Cardoville, with one of her sweetest smiles, "to be able satisfactorily to prove to you that my cure is too complete to leave the slightest apprehensions of a relapse."

M. de Gernande bowed respectfully to Mlle. de Cardoville.

During the short conversation between the two latter

individuals, they had both turned their back upon Doctor Baleinier and Rodin. The latter, profiting by the circumstance, quickly thrust into the hands of the doctor a small billet he had hastily scrawled with a pencil in the bottom of his hat. Scarcely had Baleinier perused the hurried lines than he cast a look of mingled wonder and stupefaction at Rodin, who replied to the glance of wondering surprise by making a private sign, which consisted in carrying the thumb to the forehead, then drawing it twice across in a vertical direction; this done he resumed his usual impassive look and manner.

All this passed so rapidly, that when M. de Gernande turned around Rodin was standing at some distance from Doctor Baleinier, and regarding Mlle. de Cardoville with respectful interest.

"Allow me to conduct you down-stairs, sir!" said the doctor, preceding the magistrate, on whom Adrienne bestowed a farewell salutation, replete with graceful affability.

Rodin now remained alone with Mlle. de Cardoville.

Having conducted M. de Gernande to the very door, Doctor Baleinier paused to read the paper so hastily traced with a pencil, and given to him so mysteriously by Rodin. It ran thus:

"The magistrate will proceed to the convent by the street. Do you hasten with all speed across the garden, and desire the superior to attend to the order I have given relative to the two young girls placed there; it is of the utmost importance she should do so."

The sign made by Rodin, as well as the tenor of this billet, abundantly convinced Baleinier, almost staggering as he was beneath the multiplied surprises and astounding events of the day, that the secretary of the Rev. Father d'Aigrigny, so far from attempting to betray his party, was still acting for the great glory of the Lord.

Still, while implicitly obeying, Doctor Baleinier sought in vain to comprehend the inexplicable conduct of Rodin, in making an affair public it was so necessary to keep concealed, and which might in its results so fearfully involve not only the Rev. Father d'Aigrigny, the Princesse de Saint-Dizier, but Baleinier himself.

We will now return to Rodin, whom we left alone with Mlle. de Cardoville.

CHAPTER III.

THE EX-SECRETARY OF PÈRE D'AIGRIGNY.

SCARCELY had the magistrate and Doctor Baleinier disappeared, than Mlle. de Cardoville, whose countenance was radiant with joy, cried, as she looked at Rodin with a mixture of respect and gratitude:

"Then at last, thanks to you, sir, I am free! Free! Oh, I never thought before that there was so much delight, expansiveness, and ecstasy in that adorable word, liberty!"

And Adrienne's bosom palpitated, her rosy nostrils expanded, her vermilion lips half opened, as if she inspired, with supreme happiness, a pure and vivifying air.

"I have been but a few days in this horrible house," she continued, "but I have suffered enough in my captivity to make a vow to release annually a certain number of poor prisoners confined for debt. This vow may appear to you rather antiquated," she added, with a smile, "but we must not borrow from the middle ages merely their furniture and looking-glasses. Thanks then, sir, doubly; for I make you a participator in this thought of deliverance, which I have just resolved on, as you see, in the midst of the happiness which I owe to you, and with which you seem moved — touched. Ah, let my joy be taken as my gratitude, and may it repay you for your generous succour!" said the young maiden, enthusiastically.

Mademoiselle had, in fact, remarked a complete change

in the countenance of Rodin. This man, lately so stern, so rude, so inflexible with Doctor Baleinier, seemed now under the influence of the most gentle and tender sentiments. His small, viperous eyes, half hid by their dropping lids, were fixed on Adrienne with an expression of indescribable interest. Then, as if he would shake off these impressions, he said, as if speaking to himself:

"Nonsense — folly, no weakness! Time is too precious, — my mission is not yet fulfilled. No, it is not, my dear young lady," he added, addressing Adrienne; "come, come; we will talk of gratitude hereafter. Let us now talk, and rapidly, too, of you and your family. Do you know what has occurred?"

Adrienne regarded the Jesuit with surprise, and said to him:

"What has occurred, sir?"

"Do you know the real motive of your immurement in this house? Do you know what has made Madame de Saint-Dizier and the Abbé d'Aigrigny act as they have done?"

On hearing these detested names pronounced, the features of Mlle. de Cardoville, which but a moment before had been radiant with happiness, became saddened; and she replied, with bitterness:

"Hatred, sir, no doubt animated Madame de Saint-Dizier against me."

"Yes, hatred; and, moreover, the desire to see you despoiled basely of an immense fortune."

"Me, sir! and how?"

"You do not then know, my dear young lady, the interest which you had in being on the thirteenth of February in the Rue St. François for an inheritance?"

"I know nothing of this date nor of these details, sir; but I know, imperfectly, by some family papers, and through a very extraordinary circumstance, that one of our ancestors —"

"Had bequeathed an enormous sum to be divided amongst his descendants, was it not?"

"Yes, sir."

"What, unfortunately, you do not know, my dear young lady, is that the heirs were bound to be present on the thirteenth of February, at a fixed hour; and that, that day and hour past, those who did not present themselves were to be utterly dispossessed. Do you now comprehend, my dear young lady, why you were shut up here?"

"Oh, yes, I do!" exclaimed Mlle. de Cardoville; "to the hatred which she bore me my aunt joined sordid cupidity,—all is now explained. The daughters of General Simon, co-heiresses with me, have been in like manner immured."

"And yet," exclaimed Rodin, "you and they are not the sole victims."

"Who are the others, sir?"

"A young Indian—"

"Prince Djalma?" asked Adrienne, eagerly.

"Has been nearly poisoned by a narcotic for the same motive."

"Oh, heaven!" exclaimed the young lady, clasping her hands with horror; "how horrible! He, he,—the young prince whose character was so noble and so generous? But I had sent to the Château de Cardoville—"

"A man in whom you could confide to bring the prince to Paris. I know that, my dear young lady; but by a stratagem that person was removed, and the young Indian delivered up to his enemies."

"And where is he at this moment?"

"I have but vague traces of him; I only know that he is in Paris, but I do not despair of recovering him. I will make every search that paternal anxiety can suggest, for one cannot too much admire the rare qualities of this poor king's son. What a heart, my dear young

lady, what a heart! Oh, it is a heart of gold, as bright and pure as the gold of his native country!"

"But the prince must be found, sir," said Adrienne, with emotion; "nothing must be neglected to effect this. I conjure you to set about it. He is my relative — he is here alone, without help, without succour!"

"He is, indeed!" observed Rodin, with sympathy. "Poor child, — for he is still a child, only eighteen or nineteen years of age, — thrown into the heart of Paris, into this hell, with his young, ardent, wild passions, with his simplicity and his self-dependence — to what dangers would he not be exposed?"

"It is the more necessary, sir, that we should find him immediately," said Adrienne, energetically, "in order to withdraw him from these dangers. Before I was shut up here, when I learned of his arrival in France, I had sent a trusty person to offer to him the services of an unknown friend. I now see that this idea, with which my aunt reproached me as so foolish, was very sensible, and I now abide by it more strongly than ever. The prince belongs to my family, and I owe him a generous hospitality. I intended the pavilion which I occupied at my aunt's for him."

"But you, my dear young lady?"

"This very day I shall go and inhabit a house which I had been for some time fitting up, having decidedly resolved on leaving Madame de Saint-Dizier, and living alone and as I please. Now, sir, since it is your mission to be the good genius of our family, be also equally generous towards the Prince Djalma as you have been to me and the daughters of General Simon. I entreat you to try and discover the retreat of the poor king's son, as you call him, and conduct him to the pavilion which an unknown friend offers him. Let him not disturb himself about anything; all his wants shall be provided for, and he shall live, as he ought to do, *en prince!*"

"Yes, he will live *en prince*, thanks to your regal munificence. But never was the tenderest interest better placed. It is enough to see, as I have seen, his handsome, melancholy countenance, in order — "

"What! have you seen him, sir?" inquired Adrienne, interrupting Rodin.

"Yes, my dear young lady, I have seen him for about two hours, and more was not requisite in order to appreciate him. His charming features are the mirror of his soul!"

"And where did you see him sir?"

"At your ancient Château de Cardoville, my dear young lady, not far from which the tempest had cast him, and where I had gone for — "

Then, after a moment's hesitation, Rodin added, as if carried away in spite of himself:

"Eh, where I had gone to commit a very shameless, disgraceful, and infamous act, I must confess it."

"You, sir? — at the Château de Cardoville! And to do a shameless act?" exclaimed Adrienne de Cardoville, greatly surprised.

"Alas, yes, my dear young lady!" replied Rodin, unhesitatingly. "In a word, I had instructions from M. l'Abbé d'Aigrigny to offer to your old land-steward the alternative of being sent away, or of lending himself to an unworthy transaction, — yes, to something very closely akin to spying and slander, but the honest and worthy man refused."

"Who, then, are you, sir?" asked Mlle. de Cardoville, more and more surprised.

"I am — Rodin — the ex-secretary of M. l'Abbé d'Aigrigny; a very insignificant person, as you see!"

It is impossible to describe the tone of the Jesuit, at once humble and ingenuous, as he uttered these words, which he accompanied with a lowly reverence.

At this disclosure Mlle. de Cardoville started back.

We have said Adrienne had sometimes heard speak

of Rodin, the humble secretary of the Abbé d'Aigrigny, as a sort of machine, obedient and passive. That was not all. The land-steward of Cardoville, when writing to Adrienne on the subject of Prince Djalma, complained of the perfidious and disloyal proposals of Rodin. She felt, therefore, a vague distrust arise in her mind when she learned that her liberator was the man who had played so odious a part. Still this unfavourable sentiment was balanced by what she now owed to Rodin, and by the accusation which he had just so plainly and unhesitatingly made against the Abbé d'Aigrigny before the magistrate; and then, again, by the very avowal of the Jesuit himself, who, accusing himself, anticipated every reproach that could be directed against him.

Still it was with a kind of cold reserve that Mlle. de Cardoville continued the conversation which she had commenced with as much frankness as enthusiasm and sympathy.

Rodin saw the impression that had been made, — he expected it, — and was not the least in the world disconcerted when Mlle. de Cardoville said to him, as she looked him full in the face, and fastened on him her piercing gaze:

"Oh, you are Monsieur Rodin, — the secretary of M. l'Abbé d'Aigrigny?"

"Say ex-secretary, if you please, dear young lady!" replied the Jesuit; "for you must know very well that I can never again place my feet in the residence of the Abbé d'Aigrigny. I have converted him into an implacable enemy, and I am consequently thrust into the streets. But no matter! What do I say? But so much the better, since, at this cost, the wicked are unmasked and honest people saved!"

These words so uttered, very simply, but with a degree of dignity, roused the pity of Adrienne's heart. She thought that, after all, the poor old man spoke the truth. The hatred of the Abbé d'Aigrigny, thus aroused,

would, of course, be inexorable. And, after all, Rodin had braved it in order to make a noble disclosure.

Still Mlle. de Cardoville replied coldly:

"Since you knew, sir, that the offers you were charged to make to the land-steward of Cardoville were so disgraceful and perfidious, why did you consent to be the bearer of them?"

"Why?—why?" inquired Rodin, with a sort of painful impatience; "because I was at that time completely under the charm of the Abbé d'Aigrigny, one of the most prodigiously insinuating and skilful men, and —I only learned the day before yesterday — one of the most prodigiously dangerous men in the world. He had overcome my scruples by persuading me that the end justifies the means; and I must confess that the end he proposed was great and seducing. But the day before yesterday I was most cruelly disabused, — a peal of thunder awakened me. I pray you," added Rodin, with a sort of confusion and embarrassment, "do not let us speak again of my disgraceful journey to Cardoville. Although I was but the ignorant and blind instrument, I am as much shamed and vexed as if I had acted for myself. It oppresses me — weighs on my heart. I entreat you then, let us rather speak of yourself, and what concerns you; for the soul dilates at generous sentiments, as the chest expands in a pure and salubrious air."

Rodin had made so spontaneous an avowal of his fault, had explained it so naturally, and appeared so sincerely contrite, that Adrienne, whose suspicions had no other grounds, felt her distrust gradually decrease.

"So then, it was at Cardoville," she continued, still keeping her eyes fixed on Rodin, "that you saw the Prince Djalma?"

"Yes, mademoiselle; and, from that brief interview, my affection for him began. I will, therefore, fulfil my task to the end. Be tranquil, my dear lady, — the

prince shall not be the victim of this infamous conspiracy any more than yourself or the daughters of Marshal Simon, although, unfortunately, it has not stopped there."

"Who, then, has it threatened besides?"

"M. Hardy, a man of honour and worth, also your kinsman, and equally interested in this succession, has been withdrawn from Paris by infamous treachery; and then another heir, an unfortunate artisan, falling into a snare skilfully laid for him, has been thrown into prison for debt."

"But, sir," said Adrienne, quickly, "for whose profit was this abominable conspiracy, which actually frightens me, concocted?"

"For the profit of M. l'Abbé d'Aigrigny!" replied Rodin.

"For him? And how? To what end? He was not an heir!"

"It is too long to explain to you now, my dear young lady; you will know all one day. Only be assured that your family has no enemy more inveterate than the Abbé d'Aigrigny."

"Sir," said Adrienne, impressed with a sudden suspicion, "I will speak frankly with you. What have I done to deserve or to inspire you with the lively interest which you testify towards me, and which you extend, in fact, to all the members of my family?"

"Indeed, my dear young lady," exclaimed Rodin, with a smile, "if I were to tell you, you would only smile or not believe me."

"Speak, I beg of you, sir! Do not doubt either me or yourself."

"Well, then, I am interested in, devoted to you, because your heart is generous, your mind elevated, your disposition independent and haughty. Once attached to you, *ma foi!* those belonging to you, who are, besides, all worthy of interest, are not indifferent to me. To serve them is still to serve you."

"But, sir, admitting that you judge me worthy of the too flattering compliments you are pleased to address to me, how could you judge of my heart, my mind, my disposition?"

"I will tell you, my dear young lady. But, first, I ought to make a confession which makes me feel greatly ashamed. Even if you were not so wonderfully gifted, what you have suffered since your arrival in this house ought surely to excite for you the interest of every man with a heart in his bosom!"

"I think so, sir."

"I may, then, thus explain my interest in you. But still, I confess, that would not be sufficient for me. Had you been only Mlle. de Cardoville, very rich, very noble, and very lovely, then, no doubt, your ill usage would have excited my pity. But I should have said to myself, 'This poor young lady is greatly to be pitied, no doubt, but, then, what can a poor man like me do? My only resource is my situation as secretary of the Abbé d'Aigrigny, and it is he that I should first attack. He is all-powerful — I am nothing! To contend with him is to lose the hope of saving this ill-used young lady.' Then, on the contrary, knowing what you were, my dear young lady, *ma foi!* I revolted, even inferior as I was! 'No, no,' I said, 'a thousand times no! So intelligent an understanding, so noble a heart, shall not be the victims of such an abominable conspiracy. Perhaps I shall be destroyed in the struggle; but, at least, I shall have dared to attempt it.'"

It is impossible to describe the mixture of finesse, energy, and feeling with which Rodin pronounced these words.

As often occurs to persons excessively uncouth and repulsive, as soon as they have contrived to have their ugliness forgotten, that very ugliness becomes a matter of interest and commiseration; and we say, "What a pity that such a mind, such a soul, should occupy such

a frame!" and we are struck and, as it were, softened by the contrast.

It was thus that Mlle. de Cardoville began to feel for Rodin; for, in the same proportion that he had shown himself brutal and insolent to Doctor Baleinier, had he been simple and tender towards her.

One thing only deeply excited the curiosity of Mlle. de Cardoville: it was, to know how Rodin had conceived the devotion and admiration with which she had inspired him.

"Excuse my indiscreet and obstinate curiosity, sir, but I should like to know —"

"How I acquired the knowledge of your moral character, is it not? Indeed, my dear young lady, nothing is more simple. In two words I will tell you. The Abbé d'Aigrigny considered me as a mere writing-machine, a dull, mute, blind tool."

"I thought M. d'Aigrigny had more penetration?"

"And you think rightly, my dear young lady. He is a man of unexampled sagacity; but I deceived him by affecting more than simplicity. Do not on that account think me false. No! I am proud, — yes, proud in my way; and my pride consists in never appearing above my situation, however subaltern it may be. Do you know why? Why, because then, however haughty my superiors may be, I say to myself, 'They do not know my value;' and then it is not myself, but the inferiority of my position, which they humiliate. By this I gain two things: my self-love is not offended, and I do not hate anybody."

"Yes, I comprehend this sort of pride," said Adrienne, more and more struck with Rodin's original turn of mind.

"But let us return to what concerns you, my dear young lady. On the evening before the thirteenth of February the Abbé d'Aigrigny brought me a paper written in shorthand: 'Write out this interrogatory,

and add that this document comes to support the decision of the family discussion, which declares, according to the report of Doctor Baleinier, the state of mind of Mlle. de Cardoville to be so alarming as to require her being shut up in a lunatic asylum.'"

"Yes," said Adrienne, with bitterness, "it was concerning a long conversation which I had with my aunt, Madame de Saint-Dizier, and which was written unknown to me."

"Well, I was alone with my shorthand memorial, and began to transcribe it. At the end of ten lines I became struck with astonishment. I did not know whether I was asleep or awake. 'What! mad?' I cried; 'Mlle. de Cardoville mad? Why, they are mad who dare to assert such a monstrous falsehood!' More and more interested, I continued my perusal; and I completed it. Ah, then, what shall I say to you? What I experienced then, my dear young lady, cannot be expressed. It was weakness — joy — enthusiasm!"

"Sir!" said Adrienne.

"Yes, my dear young lady, enthusiasm! Do not let this word shock your modesty. Learn that those ideas, so new, so independent, so courageous, which you uttered with so much energy before your aunt, are, without your knowing it, precisely similar to those entertained by a person for whom you will one day feel the most religious respect."

"Of whom do you speak, sir?" inquired Mlle. de Cardoville, more and more interested.

After a moment's apparent hesitation, Rodin replied:

"No, no; it is useless now to inform you. All I can say to you, my dear young lady, is this, my perusal finished, I ran to the Abbé d'Aigrigny in order to convince him of the mistake under which he laboured with respect to you. I could not meet with him; but yesterday morning I told him, unreservedly, my opinion; he appeared only astonished that I had any opinion at all; a

haughty silence was the manner in which all my arguments were treated. I believed his good faith was alarmed. I urged him, but in vain. He ordered me to follow him to the house where the will of your ancestor was to be opened. I was so blind with respect to the Abbé d'Aigrigny that, before my eyes could be opened, it required the successive arrivals of the soldier, his son, and then Marshal Simon's father. Their indignation unveiled to me the extent of a conspiracy, planned and carved out with consummate skill. Then I understood why they kept you here shut up as a lunatic; then I understood why the daughters of Marshal Simon had been taken to the convent. Then, in fact, a thousand recollections crowded upon me, — payments of letters, memoranda, which had been given to me to decipher or copy, and of which, until then, I had not divined the signification, then suddenly opened my eyes as to the object of this odious machination. To show, sitting where I was, the sudden horror I felt at these infamies would be to lose all. This error I did not commit. I contended in cunning with the Abbé d'Aigrigny. I appeared even more avaricious than himself. If this immense inheritance had been about to become my own, I could not have evinced a more fierce and pitiless desire for the prey. Thanks to this stratagem, the Abbé d'Aigrigny had not the slightest suspicion. A providential chance having rescued the inheritance from his hands, he quitted the house in the utmost consternation, I, in unutterable joy; for I had now the means of saving, of avenging you, my dear young lady. Yesterday evening I went to my office as usual; during the abbé's absence I had time to peruse the whole correspondence relative to the inheritance, so that I can now gather up all the threads of this enormous conspiracy. Oh, then, my dear young lady, before the discoveries I made, and which, but for this circumstance, I should never have thought of making, I remained aghast, — thunderstruck!"

"What discoveries, sir?"

"They are terrible secrets for those who possess them; therefore do not insist on knowing, my dear young lady; but in my scrutiny the league, formed by an insatiable cupidity against you and your parents, was laid bare before me in all its dark infamy. Then the deep and lively interest which I already felt for you and your relatives increased and extended itself to the other innocent victims of this infernal scheme. In spite of my weakness, I determined to risk all to unmask the Abbé d'Aigrigny, I collected the proofs requisite to give to my deposition before justice a sufficient authority, and this morning I left the house of the abbé without telling him of my plans, as he might have had recourse to some violent means to detain me. Still, it would have been base in me to attack him without warning. So, once out of his house, I wrote to him that I had in my hands such proofs of his unworthy conduct as would justify me in attacking him openly in the face of daylight. I would accuse him, — let him defend himself. I then went to a magistrate, and you know — "

At this moment the door opened, and one of the women keepers appeared, who said to Rodin:

"Sir, the messenger you and the judge sent to the Rue Brise-Miche has returned."

"Has he left the letter?"

"Yes, sir, which was sent up-stairs instantly."

"Very well, you may go."

The keeper left the apartment.

CHAPTER IV.

SYMPATHY.

If Mlle. de Cardoville had any suspicions remaining as to the sincerity of Rodin's devotion to her, they must all have disappeared before arguments which, unfortunately, were so natural and irresistible. How was it possible to suspect the least concert between the Abbé d'Aigrigny and his secretary, when this latter, so completely unveiling the machinations of his master, exposed him before the tribunals? And besides, did not Rodin go further even in this than Mlle. de Cardoville herself would have done? What secret plotting of the Jesuit could she suspect? Nothing, at most, beyond that of seeking to acquire, by his services, the profitable protection of this young lady. And then did he not protest against this supposition, by declaring that it was not to Mlle. de Cardoville, the lovely, noble, and rich, that he was devoted, but to the young girl with the lofty and generous heart? And then, finally, as Rodin himself said, "What man, unless he were a wretch, but must be interested in the fate of Adrienne?"

A singular feeling, a remarkable mixture of curiosity, suspense, and interest, united with Mlle. de Cardoville's gratitude towards Rodin; still, recognising beneath this lowly exterior a very superior mind, a grave suspicion came suddenly over her mind.

"Sir," she said to Rodin, "I always tell persons whom I esteem openly of the unpleasant doubts with which they

inspire me, in order that they may justify themselves and excuse me, if I am deceived."

Rodin looked at Mlle. de Cardoville with surprise, and appeared mentally to con over the suspicions he could have inspired, and, after a moment's silence, replied:

"Perhaps you refer to my journey to Cardoville, and my shameful propositions to your good and worthy land-steward? I—"

"No, no, sir," said Adrienne, interrupting him; "you made this confession to me spontaneously; and, understand that, blinded as to M. d'Aigrigny's character, you have passively executed instructions at which your mind revolted. But how is it that, with your unquestionable abilities, you occupied under him, and for so long a time, so very humble a position?"

"True," said Rodin, smiling; "that must surprise you very much; and to my discredit, my dear young lady, for a man of my capacity who remains for a long time in a humble post has evidently some radical vice, — some low and degrading passion."

"It is, sir, generally true."

"And personally true, as far as I am concerned."

"What, sir! Do you avow this?"

"Alas! I avow that I have a bad quality, to which, for forty years, I have sacrificed every prospect of attaining a suitable position."

"And this quality, sir?"

"Since I must make the degrading confession to you, it is idleness, — yes, idleness; a horror of all activity of mind, of all moral responsibility, of all commencement of anything. With the twelve hundred francs (48*l.*) which the Abbé d'Aigrigny gave me, I was the happiest man in the world. I had faith in the nobleness of his views; his thought was mine, his will was mine; my work done, I returned to my little chamber, lighted my fire, dined off vegetables; and then taking up some little-known philosophical work, and dreaming over it, I gave

full freedom to my mind, which, restrained all day, now carried me through the most delicious theories and utopianisms. Then, from the elevation of my exalted feeling, exalted by the boldness of my thoughts, I seemed to rule over my master and the greatest geniuses of the earth. This fever lasted, *ma foi!* some three or four hours, after which I slept like a tired man, and every morning I went cheerfully to my work. Sure of my next day's bread, careless for the future, living on little, awaiting impatiently the joys of my solitary evening, and saying to myself, whilst I scribbled away like a stupid machine. Eh — eh! Still, if I were so inclined — "

"Assuredly, you might as well as another, better than many others, have attained a high position," said Adrienne, singularly affected by the practical philosophy of Rodin.

"Yes, I believe I might have attained it; but, if I had, what good was it? You see, my dear young lady, what often renders people of a certain merit inexplicable to the million is, that they so frequently content themselves with saying, 'If I liked!'"

"But then, sir, without caring much for the luxuries of life, there is a certain attainment of comfort which age renders almost indispensable, but which you entirely renounce."

"Undeceive yourself, I beg, my dear young lady," said Rodin, smiling craftily; "I am a real Sybarite; I must have a good garment, a good fire, a good mattress, a good piece of bread, a good radish, well flavoured with the best gray salt, good clear water; and still, despite this complication of my tastes, my twelve hundred francs are more than enough, and I really save — something."

"And, now you are out of employ, how do you propose to live, sir?" asked Adrienne, more and more interested in the eccentricity of this man, and desirous of putting his disinterestedness to the test.

"I have by me a small purse, which has in it sufficient to maintain me here until the last knot in Père d'Aigrigny's black plot be unravelled. I owe myself this reparation for having been his dupe. Three or four days will be enough, I hope, for this work. After that, I am certain to procure some humble appointment in your province with a collector there. It is not long since that a person who took an interest in me offered me this, but then I was unwilling to leave Père d'Aigrigny, in spite of the great advantages which this proposition opened to me. Only imagine, my dear young lady, eight hundred francs (32*l.*); yes, eight hundred francs, board and lodging. As I am rather surly, I should have preferred living by myself; but, you know, as I should have had so much, I must have put up with this small inconvenience."

We cannot attempt to delineate Rodin's ingenuity in making these little household confidences, so grossly lying as they were, to Mlle. de Cardoville, whose last suspicion disappeared before them.

"What, sir," she said to the Jesuit, in a tone of interest, "do you leave Paris in three or four days?"

"I hope so, my dear young lady, and for many reasons," he said, in a mysterious tone; "but it will be very precious to me," he went on in a serious and earnest air, looking tenderly at Adrienne. "Nay, precious to carry away with me, at least, the conviction that you felt kindly towards me for having only, in the perusal of your conversation with the Princesse de Saint-Dizier, appreciated in you a height of character unequalled in our days in a young person of your age and condition."

"Ah, sir," said Adrienne, with a smile, "do not suppose that you are bound so speedily to return to me the sincere praises which I have bestowed on your superiority of mind. I should infinitely prefer ingratitude."

"Oh, I do not flatter you, my dear young lady, — what good would that be? We shall not be likely to

meet again; no, no, I do not flatter you, — I comprehend you, that's all; and what may seem odd to you is, that your appearance confirms the idea I had formed of you, my dear young lady, in reading your interview with your aunt; and some points in your character which, until then, were obscure to me, are now perfectly cleared up."

"Really, sir, you astonish me more and more."

"Why, really, I tell you my impressions, as I experienced them, and I perfectly explain to myself now, for instance, your adoration of the beautiful, your religious worship of things which appertain to the utmost refinement of the senses, your ardent aspirations towards a better world, your bold contempt for many degrading and servile customs to which women are subjected; yes, now I comprehend fully the noble pride with which you contemplate the crowd of vain, conceited, and absurd men, for whom woman is but a creature belonging to them, by the laws which they have made, after their own image, which is by no means handsome. According to these tyrants, woman, an inferior being, whose soul a council of cardinals deigned to recognise, by a majority of two, ought to consider herself a thousand times too happy to be the slave of these petty pachas who, old at thirty, worn-out, *blasés*, and wearied of every excess, desirous of repose in their exhaustion, think, as they term it, of coming to an end, which they illustrate by marrying a poor young girl who, for her part, is desirous, on the contrary, to make a beginning."

Mlle. de Cardoville would certainly have smiled at the satiric descriptions of Rodin, if she had not been singularly struck by hearing him express himself in terms so appropriate to her own ideas. When, for the first time in her life, she saw this dangerous man, Adrienne forgot, or, rather, did not know that she had encountered a Jesuit of wonderful mind; and that this class unites with marvellous knowledge the resources of

the police spy, and the deep-sealed sagacity of a confessor; diabolic priests who, by means of certain information, some statements, and some letters, can construct a character as Cuvier reconstructed a boy from certain zoölogical fragments.

Adrienne, far from interrupting Rodin, listened with increasing curiosity.

Sure of the effect he produced, Rodin continued, in an indignant tone:

"And your aunt and the Abbé d'Aigrigny treated you as a lunatic because you revolted against the future yoke of such bashaws, — because, in hatred of the disgraceful vices of slavery, you desired to be independent, with the loyal qualities which are inherent to independence; for with the broad virtues of freedom —"

"But, sir," said Adrienne, more and more surprised, "how could my thoughts be thus familiar to you?"

"In the first place, I knew you perfectly, thanks to your conversation with Madame de Saint-Dizier; and then, if by chance we should be both pursuing the same end, though by different means," added Rodin, with intense cunning, and looking at Mlle. de Cardoville with an air of meaning, "why should not our conviction be the same?"

"I do not understand you, sir; to what end do you allude?"

"The end which all noble, generous, and independent minds incessantly pursue; some acting like you, my dear young lady, from feeling and instinct, without reference, perhaps, to the high destiny which they are called upon to fulfil. Thus, for instance, when you were in the midst of the most refined enjoyments, when you were surrounded by all that most enthrals and delights the senses, do you believe that you only yielded to a love of the beautiful, to the desire of exquisite enjoyment? No, no, — a thousand times no; for then you would only have been an imperfect and personally odious crea-

ture, — a mere egotist of refined taste, and nothing more; and that, at your age, would have been frightful, my dear young lady, positively frightful."

"Do you, sir, pronounce this severe judgment on me?" asked Adrienne, with uneasiness; so much did this man impose upon her in spite of herself.

"Certainly I should pronounce it against you if you loved luxury for luxury's sake; but no, no, a very different sentiment animates you," added the Jesuit. "So let us reason together a little. Experiencing the passionate desire of all these enjoyments, you feel their value or their want more acutely than any other person. Is it not true?"

"It is, sir," replied Adrienne, greatly interested.

"Your gratitude and your interest, then, are already compulsorily bestowed on those who, poor, laborious, and unknown, procure for you those wonders of luxury which you cannot do without?"

"My feeling of gratitude is so great, sir," answered Adrienne, more and more overjoyed to find herself so well understood or divined, "that one day I had inscribed in a *chef-d'œuvre* of gold plate, instead of the name of the seller, the name of the maker, a poor artist, until then unknown, and who subsequently obtained the reputation he merited."

"I see I was not mistaken," said Rodin; "the love of these enjoyments renders you grateful to those who procure them for you; and that is not all. Look at me, for instance, neither better nor worse than my fellows, but accustomed to lead a life of privations, which are of no consequence in the world to me. Well, the privations of my neighbour touch me consequently much less than they do you, my dear young lady; for your habits of living render you, of necessity, more compassionate for misery and misfortune than any other person. You would suffer too much for that misery, and would pity and succour those who are suffering."

"Indeed, sir," said Adrienne, who began to find herself under the fatal spell of Rodin, "the more I hear you, the more I am convinced that you define a thousand times better than I did those ideas which have brought upon me so heavily the reproaches of Madame de Saint-Dizier and the Abbé d'Aigrigny. Oh, speak, speak, sir! I cannot tell you with what delight — what pride I listen to you."

And attentive, excited, her eyes fastened on the Jesuit with as much interest as sympathy and curiosity, Adrienne, by a graceful movement of the head, which was familiar to her, threw back her long curls of her golden hair, as if better to gaze on Rodin, who replied:

"And you are astonished, my dear young lady, at not having been understood by your aunt and the Abbé d'Aigrigny? But what have you in common with these hypocritical, jealous, plotting spirits, such as I now know them to be? Will you have another proof of their hateful blindness? Among what they styled your monstrous follies, which was the most wicked, the most damnable? Why, it was your resolution to live henceforth alone, and as you pleased, to dispose freely of your present and your future; they found that odious, detestable, immoral. And yet was your resolution dictated by a foolish love of liberty? No. By an ill-regulated aversion from all restraint and direction? No. By the sole desire of making yourself singular? No; for then I should have blamed you severely."

"In truth, other reasons actuated me, sir, I assure you," said Adrienne, eagerly, and becoming very jealous of the esteem which her character had inspired Rodin withal.

"Eh, I know that well enough, your motives were and could but be most excellent," continued the Jesuit. "Wherefore did you take a resolution so warmly assailed? Was it to brave established usages? No; you respected them so long as the hatred of Madame de

Saint-Dizier did not force you to withdraw yourself from her harsh guardianship. Were you desirous to live alone in order to avoid the eyes of the world? No; for you would be a hundred times more in view in this singular way of life than in any other. Were you, in truth, desirous of employing your liberty badly? No, — a thousand times no! To do ill, people seek the shade, isolation; placed, on the contrary, as you will be, all the jealous and envious eyes of the vulgar herd will be constantly directed towards you. Why, therefore, did you take so bold and so unusual a determination, and so remarkable in a young person of your age? Shall I tell you, my dear young lady? Well, then, you were desirous of proving, in your own person, that every female, with purity of heart, right principles, firm character, and independent conduct, may nobly and proudly leave that humiliating tutelage which custom imposes on her! Yes, instead of leading the life of a slave in revolt, a life fatally devoted to hypocrisy or vice, you would live in the sight of all, frank, independent, and respected. In fine, you wish to have, like man, a free will, entire responsibility in all acts of life, in order to prove indubitably that a woman completely left to herself can equal a man in reason, in wisdom, in correctness, and surpass him in delicacy and dignity. This was your intention, my dear young lady. Your example is noble, it is grand; will it be imitated? I hope so! But your noble attempt will always place you high and loftily, believe me."

The eyes of mademoiselle shone with proud and soft brilliancy, her cheeks were slightly flushed, her bosom palpitated, and she raised her beautiful head with a gesture of involuntary pride; and, at length, completely under the charm of this diabolical man, she cried:

"But, sir, who are you, then, to know — to analyse thus my secret thoughts, to read in my soul more clearly than I read myself, to give a new life, a fresh incentive

to those ideas of independence which have so long germed in my bosom? Who are you, indeed, who make me seem so strong in my own eyes, that now I feel a consciousness that I may accomplish a mission honourable to myself, and perhaps useful to those of my sisters, who suffer a hard servitude. Once more, sir, who are you?"

"Who am I, mademoiselle?" answered Rodin, with a smile replete with philanthropy. "I have already told you that I am a poor old fellow, who for forty years, after having every day served as a machine to write down the ideas of others, returns each evening into his retreat where he permits himself to indulge in his own lucubrations, — a good fellow, who from his garret assists, and even takes a small part in, the movement of five spirits who are marching onwards towards an end more near, perhaps, than some suppose. Thus, my dear young lady, as I told you just now, you and I tend to the same ends, — you without thinking it, and in continuing to obey your rare and divine instincts. So believe me, live, live always charming, always free, always happy! That is your mission; it is more full of Providence than you may suppose. Yes, continue to surround yourself with every luxury of art and refinement. Refine still your senses, still purify your tastes by the exquisite selection of your enjoyments. Reign by mind, by grace, by purity, over the weak and hideous flock of men, who from to-morrow, seeing you free and alone, will come and buzz around you. They will think you an easy prey, within the reach of their cupidity, their egotism, their contemptible weakness. Rail at and stigmatise their absurd and sordid pretensions. Be queen of this world, and be worthy to be respected as a queen. Love, shine, enjoy, that is your part here below; do not doubt that. All those flowers which Heaven has shed on you so abundantly will one day bear fruits ripe and plentiful. You will be supposed to live only for pleasure, whilst, in

fact, you will have lived for the most noble end to which a great and beautiful mind can devote itself. Then, perhaps, some years hence we may meet again, you still more lovely and beloved, I still more old and obscure; but no matter, a secret voice now says to you, I am certain, that between us two so dissimilar there is a secret link, a mysterious communion, which henceforth nothing can destroy."

As he pronounced these last words with an accent so deeply full of emotion that Adrienne trembled, Rodin imperceptibly drew nearer to her, as it were, without walking, but by dragging his feet along, and gliding over the floor by a sort of slow motion like that of a reptile; he had spoken with so much energy, so much warmth, that his pale face was slightly flushed, and his repulsive ugliness almost disappeared before the sparkling glances of his small yellow eyes, then fully opened, round, and staring, and which he fastened steadfastly on Adrienne, who, with her lips half open, and her breathing oppressed, could not take her gaze from off the Jesuit. He ceased speaking, but she listened still. What this lovely, elegant girl experienced at the sight of this little, miserable, dirty, ugly, old man was inexplicable. The comparison, so vulgar, yet so true, of the fearful fascination of the serpent over the bird, may, however, give some idea of this strange impression. Rodin's tactics were skilful and sure.

Up to this time Mlle. de Cardoville had not reasoned either on her tastes or her instincts, but had given herself up to them because they were harmless and delightful. How happy and proud, then, must she be to hear a man endowed with a superior mind, not only praise her inclinations for what she had formerly been so bitterly blamed, but congratulate her upon them as noble and divine.

If Rodin had only addressed himself to Adrienne's self-love, he would have been caught in his own perfidi-

ous snare, for she had not the slightest vanity; but he addressed himself to all that was most elevated and noble in the heart of this young creature, and what he appeared to encourage and admire in her was really worthy of encouragement and admiration. How was it possible for her to escape language which concealed such dark and malicious plans?

Struck by the singular intelligence of the Jesuit, feeling her curiosity greatly excited by some mysterious words which he had designedly let drop, not explaining even to herself the singular power which this pernicious man already exercised over her mind, feeling a respectful compassion when she recollected that a man of that age and understanding was in a most precarious position, Adrienne said to him, with her natural cordiality:

"A man of your merit and your heart, sir, ought not to be at the mercy of circumstances. Some of your words have opened fresh horizons to me. I feel that in many points your advice will be very useful to me in future; in fact, in coming to rescue me from this house, in devoting yourself to other persons of my family, you have testified an interest in me that I cannot forget without ingratitude. A position very humble but certain has been taken from you. Allow me to —"

"Not another word, my dear young lady," said Rodin, interrupting Mlle. de Cardoville with an air of vexation.

"I feel the deepest sympathy towards you. I honour myself for having ideas in common with your own; in fact, I firmly believe that some day you will have to ask advice of the poor old philosopher! In consequence of that I ought to maintain with respect to you the most perfect independence."

"But, sir, it is on the contrary I who shall be obliged if you will accept what I desire so earnestly to offer you."

"Oh, my dear young lady," said Rodin, smiling, "I knew your generosity would always make the debt light

and easy; but once again, I cannot accept anything from you. One day, perhaps you will know why."

"One day?"

"It is impossible for me to say more. And then supposing that I owe you any obligation, how would I then tell you of all there is in you that is good and beautiful? Hereafter, if you owe me much for my advice, so much the better; I shall only be the more at my ease to blame you if I find cause to blame."

"But then, sir, gratitude towards you is forbidden."

"No, no," said Rodin, with apparent emotion. "Oh, believe me, there will come a solemn moment when you will be able to acquit yourself in a manner equally worthy of yourself and me."

The conversation was interrupted by the keeper, who came in and said to Adrienne:

"Mademoiselle, there is down below a little hump-backed work-girl who wants to speak with you. According to the fresh orders of the doctor you are at liberty to receive whomever you please; so I have come to ask if I shall let her come up. She is so badly dressed that I did not dare."

"Bring her up directly," said Adrienne, quickly recognising La Mayeux by the keeper's description; "immediately!"

"The doctor has also given orders to have his carriage placed at your command. Shall I desire the coachman to harness the horses?"

"Yes, in a quarter of an hour," replied Adrienne; and the woman quitted the apartment. Then turning to Rodin:

"The magistrate will not be long now before he returns with Marshal Simon's daughters, I should think?"

"I should think not, my dear young lady. But who is this young deformed work-girl?" asked Rodin, with an air of indifference.

"She is the adopted sister of a worthy artisan, who

risked all to snatch me from this abode, sir!" replied Adrienne, with emotion. "This young work-girl is a rare and excellent creature. Never was a mind more exalted, a heart more generous, hidden beneath an exterior less —"

Pausing when she thought of Rodin, who seemed to her nearly to unite the same physical and moral contrasts as La Mayeux, Adrienne added, looking with inimitable grace at the Jesuit, who was astonished at her sudden silence:

"No; this noble girl is not the only person who proves how real nobility of soul, how superiority of mind, may render indifferent the vain advantage due only to chance or wealth!"

At the moment Adrienne uttered these last words, La Mayeux entered the apartment.

CHAPTER V.

MISTRUST.

Mlle. de Cardoville advanced rapidly towards La Mayeux, and, extending her arms, said to her, in a voice filled with emotion:

"Come, come — there is now no grating to separate us!"

At this allusion, which recalled to her that before her poor and toiling hand had been respectfully kissed by this beautiful and rich patrician, the young work-girl experienced a sensation of gratitude at once indescribable and proud. But, as she hesitated to reply to her cordial reception, Adrienne embraced her with touching earnestness.

When La Mayeux saw herself encircled in the lovely arms of Mlle. de Cardoville, and felt the fresh and rosy lips of the young lady applied with sisterly affection on her pale and wan cheeks, she burst into tears, wholly unable to utter a word.

Rodin, who had retreated into a corner, contemplated this scene with secret uneasiness. Aware of the refusal, full of dignity, which La Mayeux had given to the perfidious temptations of the superior of the Convent of Ste. Marie; well aware of the deep devotion of this generous creature for Agricola, a devotion which had testified itself so boldly with regard to Mlle. de Cardoville a few days previously, the Jesuit did not like to see Adrienne thus display her desire to increase this regard. He thought, wisely, that we should never disdain an

enemy or a friend, how small soever they may be. And his enemy was any one who devoted herself to Mlle. de Cardoville; and then we well know that Rodin united to a marvellous firmness of character certain superstitious weaknesses, and he felt uneasy at the singular impression of fear with which La Mayeux inspired him; and he determined to remember this presentiment or this foresight.

Delicate minds have always in the smallest things nice and graceful instincts. Thus, after La Mayeux had shed many and sweet tears of gratitude, Adrienne, taking a richly embroidered handkerchief, wiped away with gentle hand the moist evidences which inundated the melancholy face of the young work-girl.

This action, so spontaneously kind, saved La Mayeux from humiliation; for, alas! humiliation and suffering are the two abysses which are for ever on each side of the unfortunate! And thus for misfortune, the least delicate attention is almost invariably a double obligation!

Perhaps a smile of disdain may attend the instance we are about to deduce; but the poor Mayeux, not daring to draw from her pocket her old ragged handkerchief, would have remained long blinded by her tears if Mlle. de Cardoville had not come to her assistance.

"You are so good! Ah, you are so noble and charitable, mademoiselle!"

This was all that the work-girl could say, in a deeply affected voice, and touched to the heart by the attention of Mlle. de Cardoville, — more so, perhaps, than she would have been for any actual service done for her.

"Look there, sir!" said Adrienne to Rodin, who came quickly towards her. "Yes," added the young patrician, with pride, "here is a treasure I have discovered. Look, sir, and love her as I love her, honour her as I honour

her. Here is one of those hearts which we are seeking for."

"And which we find, *Dieu merci!*" said Rodin to Adrienne, and bowing to the work-girl.

La Mayeux raised her eyes slowly towards the Jesuit, and — strange! At the sight of that cadaverous countenance which smiled benignantly on her, the young girl shuddered. She had never before seen this man, yet she instantly felt for him almost the same impression of fear and dislike which he had just experienced towards her. Usually timid and embarrassed, La Mayeux could not take her eyes off Rodin. Her heart palpitated violently, as if some great danger was about to beset her. And as the worthy creature only feared for those whom she loved, she drew nigh to Adrienne involuntarily, still keeping her eyes fixed on Rodin.

He was too keen a physiognomist not to perceive the disagreeable impression which he had made, and felt his instinctive aversion against the work-girl increase.

Instead of lowering his eyes before her, he appeared to scrutinise her with an attention so sustained, that Mlle. de Cardoville was greatly surprised.

"Pardon, my dear young girl," said Rodin, with the air of trying to collect his thoughts, and addressing La Mayeux, "pardon me, but I think I am not deceived! Did you not go a few days since to the Convent of Ste. Marie, close by?"

"Yes, sir."

"Ah, I thought so — it is you! What was I thinking of?" he exclaimed. "It was you! I ought not to have had a doubt on the point."

"What are you alluding to, sir?" inquired Adrienne.

"Ah, you are right, my dear young lady," said Rodin, pointing to La Mayeux. "There is a heart — such a noble one as we are seeking. If you knew with what dignity, with what courage, this poor child, who was out of work, — and for her to want work is to want every-

thing, — if you knew, I say, with what dignity she repulsed the degrading wages which the superior of the convent had the indignity to offer to her on condition of undertaking to play the spy in the family where she proposed to place her!"

"Oh, it is infamous!" exclaimed Mlle. de Cardoville, with disgust. "Such a proposition to this poor child — to her!"

"Mademoiselle," said La Mayeux, bitterly, "I had no work — I was poor. They did not know me — they thought they might propose anything to me."

"I say," said Rodin, "that it was a two-fold indignity on the part of the superior to tempt misery, and that it was doubly great for you to have refused."

"Sir!" said La Mayeux, with modest embarrassment.

"Oh, oh, no one intimidates me!" continued Rodin. "Praise or blame, I say bluntly what comes into my thoughts. Ask this dear young lady!" and he pointed to Adrienne. "I will, therefore, tell you openly that I think as much and as highly of you as Mlle. de Cardoville herself does."

"Believe me, my dear girl," said Adrienne, "there are praises which honour, recompense, and encourage; and those of M. Rodin are amongst the number. I know it — oh, yes, I know it!"

"But, my dear young lady, you must not cast on me all the honour of this opinion!"

"What mean you, sir?"

"Is not this dear girl the adopted sister of Agricola Baudoin, the brave artisan, the energetic and popular poet? Well, is not the regard of such a man the best guarantee in the world, and gives us a better assurance than judging by the mere label — if I may use such an expression," added Rodin, with a smile.

"You are right, sir," said Adrienne. "For, without knowing this dear girl, I began to interest myself deeply in her lot, from the day when her adopted brother spoke

to me of her. He expressed himself with so much warmth and strong feeling that I at once esteemed a young girl capable of inspiring so noble an attachment."

These words of Adrienne, combined with another circumstance, affected La Mayeux so powerfully that her wan countenance became purple.

We know that the poor girl loved Agricola with an ardour as passionate as it was painful and hidden; and any allusion, however indirect, to this fatal sentiment, caused cruel embarrassment to the young creature.

And at the moment when Mlle. de Cardoville had spoken of Agricola's attachment for her, La Mayeux had met the keen and penetrating glance of Rodin fastened on her. Alone with Adrienne, the young work-girl, on hearing the smith's name mentioned, would only have experienced a passing emotion; but it seemed to her that the Jesuit, who, unfortunately, had already inspired her with involuntary alarm, read in her heart, and surprised in it, the secret of the fatal love of which she was the victim. Thence the deep blush of the poor girl, her visible and painful embarrassment, which had struck Adrienne.

A mind as subtle and quick as Rodin's always seeks the cause of the smallest effect; and, putting various circumstances together, saw on the one side a deformed but remarkably intelligent girl, capable of intense devotion, and, on the other, a young artisan, handsome, bold, sensible, and open-hearted. "Brought up together, and sympathising with each other on very many points, they must have the affection of brother and sister," he thought; "but a sisterly love does not cause a blush in the cheek. Can she really be in love with Agricola?"

On the highroad to this discovery, Rodin was desirous to push his investigation to the end; and remarking the surprise which the visible trouble of La Mayeux caused to Adrienne, he said to the latter, smiling and looking significantly towards La Mayeux:

"Ha! you see, my dear young lady, how she blushes, poor dear! when one alludes to the strong attachment of this worthy artisan for her!"

La Mayeux stooped her head, overwhelmed with confusion.

After a moment's pause, during which Rodin kept silence, in order to give his malignant shaft time to penetrate deeply into the heart of the poor girl, the executioner resumed:

"You see, my dear young lady, how it affects her!"

Then, after another pause, perceiving that La Mayeux changed from scarlet to a ghastly paleness, and trembled in every limb, the Jesuit feared he had gone too far, for Adrienne said to La Mayeux, with interest:

"My dear girl, why are you thus agitated?"

"It is plain enough," replied Rodin, with the utmost simplicity, for, knowing what he wished to ascertain, he seemed not to suspect anything. "It is quite plain this dear girl has the modesty of a good and tender sister for her brother. By loving him, by assimilating herself with him, where he is praised, it appears to her as though she were praised herself."

"And as she is as modest as she is excellent," added Adrienne, taking La Mayeux's hands, "the smallest praise either of her adopted brother or herself troubles her, as we have seen, in what is really childish, for which I shall scold her as she deserves."

Mlle. de Cardoville spoke earnestly, for the explanation which Rodin had given seemed to her really very plausible.

Like all persons who, fearing every moment to have their painful secret discovered, and who become assured as quickly as they become alarmed, La Mayeux persuaded herself — she was compelled to do so that she might not sink from shame — that the last words of Rodin were sincere, and that he did not suspect the love she had for Agricola. Then her agony dimin-

ished, and she found a few words to say to Mlle. de Cardoville.

"Excuse me, mademoiselle," she said, timidly, "I am so little accustomed to such kindness as yours, that I make but a bad return for your goodness to me."

"My goodness, my poor girl!" answered Adrienne; "I have done nothing for you yet. But, thank God! from to-day I may keep my promise, and recompense your devotion to me, your courageous resignation, your worthy love of work, and the noble disposition, of which you have given so many proofs in the midst of the most cruel trials and visitations. In a word, from this day forth, if you like, we will not part from each other."

"Mademoiselle, you are too good," said La Mayeux, in a trembling voice; "but I —"

"Oh, take courage," said Adrienne, interrupting her, as guessing her reply. "If you will accept my offer, I shall be able to reconcile with my somewhat egotistical desire to have you constantly with me the independence of your disposition, your habits of occupation, your love of retirement, and your desire to devote yourself to all that deserve commiseration. And, even, I will not conceal from you, it is by giving you the means of satisfying your generous inclinations that I rely on seducing you, and fixing you with me."

"But what have I done, mademoiselle," said La Mayeux, with simplicity, "to deserve so much gratitude on your part? Is it not you, on the contrary, who began by showing yourself so generous towards my adopted brother?"

"Oh, I do not speak to you of gratitude," said Adrienne; "we are quits. But I speak to you of affection and the sincere friendship which I offer to you."

"Friendship! — for me, mademoiselle?"

"Come, come," said Adrienne, with a lovely smile, "do not be proud because you have the advantage of the position. And besides, I have taken it into my head

that you will be my friend; and you will see this will be so. But now I think of it, — it is rather late, to be sure, — but what lucky chance brings you here?"

"This morning M. Dagobert received a letter, in which he was requested to come here, where, as it said, he would have good news relative to that which was most interesting to him of anything in the world. Believing that it concerned the Mlles. Simon, he said to me, 'La Mayeux, you have taken so much interest in what concerns my dear children, that it is necessary that you should come with me. You will see my joy at finding them, and that will be your reward.'"

Adrienne looked at Rodin, who made an affirmative sign with his head, and said:

"Yes, yes, my dear young lady; it was I who wrote to the brave soldier, but without signing or explaining myself any further. You know why!"

"How is it then, my dear girl, that you have come here alone?"

"Alas, mademoiselle, I was, when I came, so overcome by your reception of me, that I could not tell you all my fears."

"What fears?" asked Rodin.

"Knowing that you were here, mademoiselle, I supposed that it was you who had sent this letter to M. Dagobert. I told him so, and he was of the same opinion as myself. When we arrived here, his impatience was so great that he inquired at the door if the young orphan ladies were in this house, and he described them. They told him 'No;' that they were not here. Then, in spite of my entreaties, he would go to the convent to inquire after them."

"What imprudence!" exclaimed Adrienne.

"After what took place the other night!" added Rodin, shrugging up his shoulders.

"It was in vain that I told him," continued La Mayeux, "that the letter did not positively announce

that the orphans would be given up to him, but that he would get some particulars about them. He would not listen to me, and told me, 'If I learn nothing, I will come back to you here; but they were in the convent the day before yesterday, and now that all is discovered, they cannot refuse them to me.'"

"And with such a head," said Rodin, with a smile, "all discussion is useless."

"Indeed, I trust he will not be recognised!" said Adrienne, reflecting on Doctor Baleinier's threats.

"That is not likely," said Rodin, "for they would not allow him to enter the door. That I hope will be the greatest trial he will have; and the magistrate cannot now be long before he returns with the young ladies. I am not wanted here any longer, and other cares call me hence. I must search for Prince Djalma; so be so kind as to inform me when and where I may see you, my dear young lady, in order that I may from time to time inform you of the result of my researches, and to agree upon all that concerns the young prince, if, as I hope, those researches will have good results."

"You will find me in my new abode, whither I propose going upon quitting this place; it is situated in the Rue d'Anjou, and is known as the Hôtel de Beaulieu. But," added Adrienne, after reflecting for several minutes, "upon further consideration, it does not appear to me either correct, or, indeed, for several reasons, scarcely prudent, to allow Prince Djalma to occupy the pavilion in which I used to reside in the Hôtel de Saint-Dizier. A short time since I saw a charming little residence, elegantly furnished, and ready for immediate occupation. A few tasteful embellishments, which might be effected in twenty-four hours, would render it a delightful abode. Yes, yes, that will be a thousand times better," continued Mlle. de Cardoville, after a fresh silence, "and the more so, as it will enable me to preserve a more strict *incognito* on the subject."

"Do I understand, then," said Rodin, whose schemes were dangerously threatened by this new resolution on the part of Mlle. de Cardoville, "that it is your desire the prince should be kept in ignorance, — in perfect unconsciousness of the hand which has been extended to serve him?"

"I not only desire that my name be concealed from him, but that he be kept in absolute ignorance that such a person as myself is in existence, at least for the present. Hereafter — probably in a month's time — I may see cause to change my plan; but I must be entirely guided by circumstances."

"But," said Rodin, concealing by a mighty effort the extreme disappointment he experienced, "will it not be difficult, not to say impossible, to preserve the secret of your beneficence?"

"Had the prince inhabited my pavilion, as I originally intended, I should have had my fears on the subject; his being so completely in the vicinity of my aunt must have enlightened him on the subject of his mysterious friend, and the dread of that is one of my chief reasons for altering my first intentions; but the prince will now be situated in a distant neighbourhood, the Rue Blanche. Who will inform him of that which I am desirous of concealing from him? One of my oldest friends, M. Norval, yourself, and this good girl," — pointing to La Mayeux, — "on whose discretion I rely equally with your own, are the only depositaries of my secret, which I fear not will be carefully kept. To-morrow we will discuss this subject at greater length. The more important affair now is, that you should be successful in discovering the present abode of this unfortunate young prince."

However wrathful and provoked at the sudden determination taken by Adrienne with respect to Djalma, Rodin constrained himself sufficiently to listen with affected calmness and to reply:

"My dear young lady, your wishes shall be strictly

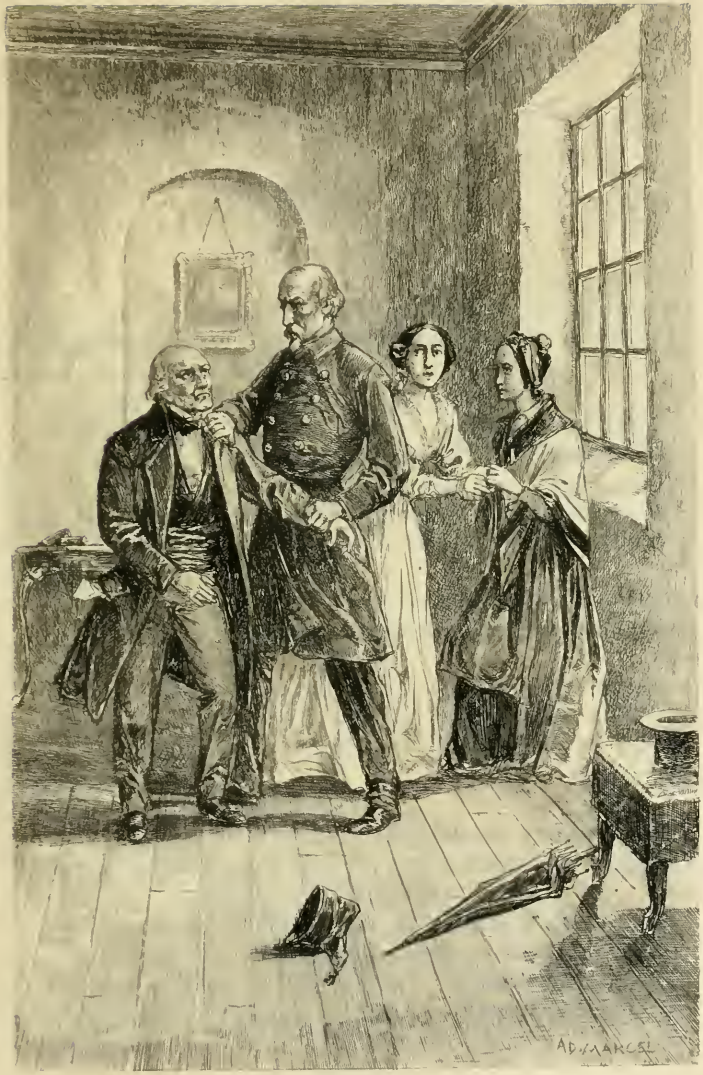
attended to; and to-morrow, with your permission, I will wait upon you to give an account of what but just now you were pleased to style my providential mission."

"To-morrow, then, I shall expect you with impatience," said Adrienne, in a kind and almost affectionate tone; "promise me your further kind assistance, and allow me to reckon upon your friendship, as you may henceforward depend on mine. You will require a considerable share of indulgence to bear with the many proofs to which I shall put your kindness, for I perceive continual necessity for requesting your advice and valuable assistance, and that I shall have to largely increase my present heavy debt of gratitude to you."

"Oh, my dear young lady, my only regret is, that as yet you owe me so little, — so very little," said Rodin, proceeding slowly towards the door, after a profound bow as he passed Adrienne.

Just as he was issuing forth, he encountered Dagobert.

"Ha, ha!" exclaimed the soldier, seizing the Jesuit by the collar with a vigorous grasp, "here is one of them; at length, then, I have got one of the party."


AD. MARCEL

CHAPTER VI.

EXPLANATIONS.

Mlle. de Cardoville, on seeing Dagobert seize Rodin so rudely by the collar, cried out in alarm, and advanced several paces towards the soldier.

"In heaven's name, sir, what are you doing?"

"What am I doing?" replied the soldier, sternly, and without releasing his hold of Rodin, whilst he turned his head towards Adrienne, whom he did not know. "I profit by the occasion to throttle one of the wretches of that renegade's gang, until he will tell me where my poor children are."

"You are choking me!" said the Jesuit, with a half strangled voice, and endeavouring to release himself from the old soldier's clutch.

"Where are the orphans, since they are not here, and they shut the door of the convent in my face without giving me any reply?" exclaimed Dagobert, in a voice of thunder.

"Help!" murmured Rodin.

"It is frightful!" exclaimed Adrienne; and pale and trembling she addressed Dagobert, with her hands clasped, and saying, "Mercy, sir, hear me, hear me!"

"M. Dagobert," cried La Mayeux, seizing the arm of Dagobert with her weak hands, and pointing to Adrienne, "she is Mlle. de Cardoville! What violence you are using in her presence, — and you must, no doubt, be mistaken."

At the name of Mlle. de Cardoville, the benefactress of his son, the soldier turned around quickly, and let go his grip of Rodin, who, purple in the face from rage and suffocation, adjusted his collar and cravat with great haste.

"Pardon me, mademoiselle!" said Dagobert, going towards Adrienne, still pale with fright; "I did not know who you were, but my first impulse carried me away in spite of myself."

"But what cause of anger has this gentleman ever given you?" asked Adrienne; "if you had listened to me you would know —"

"Excuse me if I interrupt you, mademoiselle!" said the soldier, repressing his ire. Then turning to Rodin, who had reassumed his calmness, "Thank the lady, and be off with you. If you stay here I will not answer for myself."

"One word only, my dear sir," said Rodin; "I —"

"I tell you I will not answer for myself if you remain here!" cried Dagobert, stamping his foot.

"But, in the name of heaven, tell me the cause of this anger," said Adrienne; "and, above all, be not deceived by appearances, but calm yourself and listen."

"Yes, I am calm, mademoiselle," exclaimed Dagobert, with despair in his accents; "but I can only think of one thing, mademoiselle, and that is the arrival of Marshal Simon, who will be in Paris to-day or to-morrow."

"Can it be possible?" said Adrienne.

Rodin made a movement of surprise and joy.

"Yesterday evening," said Dagobert, "I received a letter from the marshal, who has landed at Havre. For the last three days I have tried in every way, hoping again to have the orphans restored to me, since the machinations of these have failed (and he pointed to Rodin with a fresh burst of anger); but no, they are plotting some fresh infamy — nothing is too atrocious for them!"

"But, sir," said Rodin, advancing towards him, "permit me to — "

"Leave the room!" cried Dagobert, whose irritation and anxiety redoubled when he remembered that from one moment to another Marshal Simon might arrive in Paris. "Go, I say! for if it were not for mademoiselle, I should at least have my revenge on one of you."

Rodin made a sign to Adrienne, to whose side he quietly approached, pointed to Dagobert with a gesture of pity, and said to him:

"I will go, sir; and the more willingly that I was quitting the apartment when you came into it."

Then going close up to Mlle. de Cardoville, the Jesuit said, in a low voice:

"Poor soldier! Grief distracts his brain, and he will not hear me. Explain all to him, my dear young lady; he will be convinced then," he added, with a significant air. "But in the meantime," he continued, whilst rummaging in the side pocket of his greatcoat, and drawing out a small packet, "give him this, I beg of you, my dear young lady; this is my vengeance, and it will be sufficient for me."

And as Adrienne, taking the small packet in her hand, looked at the Jesuit with astonishment, he placed his forefinger on his lip, as if to impose silence on her, reached the door by walking backwards on the points of his toes, and left the room, after having cast another look of commiseration on Dagobert, who, in deep distress, with his head bowed down, and his hands crossed over his breast, remained silent to all the anxious consolations that La Mayeux was using to him.

When Rodin had quitted the room, Adrienne, approaching the soldier, said to him, in her gentle voice, and with an expression of touching interest:

"Your sudden entry has prevented me from asking you a question in which I am much interested, — how is your wound?"

"Thank you, mademoiselle," said Dagobert, starting from his painful reverie, "thank you; but it is no great matter, and I have not had time even to think of it. I am sorry to have been so rude in your presence as to turn this rogue out of the room, but my temper gets the better of me, and at the sight of these scoundrels I cannot restrain myself."

"And yet, believe me, you have been too prompt in your sentence on the person who was here just now."

"Too prompt, mademoiselle! Oh, it is not to-day that I met him for the first time. He was with that renegade, the Abbé d'Aigrigny."

"He was; but that does not prevent him from being an honest and excellent man."

"He?" exclaimed Dagobert.

"Yes, sure; at this moment there is but one thought that occupies his mind, and that is to restore your dear children to you."

"He?" said Dagobert, looking at Adrienne as if he could not believe what he heard; "he restore my dear children to me?"

"Yes, and sooner, perhaps, than you suppose."

"Mademoiselle," said Dagobert, suddenly, "he deceives you, — you are the dupe of this old vagabond."

"No," said Adrienne, shaking her head, and smiling, "I have proofs of his sincerity; the first is, that it is he who has enabled me to quit this house."

"Can it be possible?" said Dagobert, amazed.

"Quite true; and what is more, here is something which may, perhaps, reconcile him with you," said Adrienne, giving him the small packet which Rodin had handed to her before he quitted the apartment. "Unwilling to exasperate you further by his presence, he said to me, 'Mademoiselle, hand this to the brave soldier, that will be my vengeance.'"

Dagobert looked at Mlle. de Cardoville with surprise, and opened the small parcel mechanically. When he

had unfolded it, and recognised his silver cross, blackened by years, and the old red riband, faded as it was, which had been stolen from him at the inn of the White Falcon, with his papers, he exclaimed, with a broken voice and beating heart:

"My cross! My cross! It is my cross!"

And in the enthusiasm of his joy he pressed the silver star against his grizzled moustache.

Adrienne and La Mayeux felt themselves deeply affected by the soldier's emotion, who exclaimed, hastening towards the door at which Rodin had gone out:

"After a service done to Marshal Simon, to my wife, or my son, no one could confer a greater favour on myself. And you answer for this worthy man, do you, mademoiselle? And I have wronged him, ill-treated him, in your presence. He has a right to an apology, and he shall have it — he shall have it!"

So saying, Dagobert went out of the room hastily, crossed two rooms, reached the staircase, and, descending rapidly, caught Rodin on the bottom stair.

"Monsieur," said the soldier, in a voice of emotion, and taking him by the arm, "you must return immediately."

"It would be as well, my dear sir," said Rodin, stopping good-humouredly, "if you would make up your mind; only a moment since and you ordered me out, and now you countermand me back again. Where is all this to end?"

"But a minute ago I was wrong, and when I am wrong I am always anxious to make reparation. I have ill-used you, assaulted you before witnesses, and before witnesses I wish to apologise to you."

"But, — my dear sir, I thank you, — but — I am in haste."

"What is your haste to me? I tell you, you must come up-stairs again, directly. If not — if not," continued Dagobert, taking the Jesuit's hand, and pressing

it with equal warmth and compunction, "if not, the joy you have caused me in restoring my cross will be incomplete."

"If that be the case, my good friend, let us go up-stairs again — let us go directly."

"Not only have you restored to me my cross, which I — I — have — have — wept over, — don't say so to any one," said Dagobert, with eagerness; "but this young lady tells me that, thanks to you, these poor children, — mind it is no false hopes, — is it really true — is it really true?"

"Eh, eh, how inquisitive he is!" said Rodin, with a cunning smile. Then he added, "Come, come, make your mind easy, you shall have your two angels, old good-for-nothing."

And the Jesuit returned up the staircase.

"They will be restored to me, and to-day?" exclaimed Dagobert; and as Rodin went up the stairs, he stopped him suddenly by the sleeve.

"Now, my good friend, we are decidedly stopping on our road," said the Jesuit; "are we to go up or go down? Really you knock me about like a shuttlecock."

"True, true! Up-stairs you will explain to us better. Come then as quickly as possible," said Dagobert.

Then putting his arm under Rodin's he hurried him along, and conducted him triumphantly into the apartment, where Adrienne and La Mayeux had remained, greatly surprised at the sudden disappearance of the soldier.

"Here he is! Here he is!" said Dagobert, entering. "I overtook him at the bottom of the staircase."

"And you made me return at a smartish pace," added Rodin, somewhat out of wind.

"Now, sir," said Dagobert, with a serious voice, "I declare before mademoiselle that I was wrong to assault you, to ill-use you, and I offer my apologies, sir; and I am assured, and joyfully, that I owe you, oh, much — very much; and I swear to you that when I owe, I pay."

And Dagobert extended his hand with much heartiness to Rodin, who shook it in a friendly manner, adding:

"Eh, what does all this mean? What is the great service of which you speak to me?"

"This!" said Dagobert, making the cross shine in Rodin's eyes; "but you do not know what it is to me to have the cross restored?"

"On the contrary, supposing that you must have a great regard for it, I thought to have the pleasure of handing it to you myself, and that was the reason why I brought it. But, between ourselves, you gave me when we met such a familiar reception, that I really had not time."

"Sir," said Dagobert, confused, "I assure you that I repent excessively what I did."

"I know it, my worthy friend, and so do not let us say another word about it. But I see you were fond of your cross."

"Fond of it, sir!" exclaimed Dagobert; "why, this cross (and he kissed it) is a relic of mine. He who gave it me was my saint, and he had touched it."

"What!" said Rodin, affecting to look at the cross with as much curiosity as respectful admiration; "what! Napoleon — the great Napoleon — has touched it with his own hand — his own victorious hand — that noble star of honour?"

"Yes, sir, with his own hand he placed it here on my bleeding breast as a heal-all for my fifth wound. So, you see, I believe that if I were bursting with hunger between my food and my cross, I should not hesitate, in order that I might have it on my breast, in dying. But enough — enough! Let us talk of something else. This is very foolish," added Dagobert, rubbing his hand across his eyes; then as if ashamed of denying what he felt, "Yes, yes!" he said, lifting up his head quickly, and disclosing the tear that was rolling down his cheek,

"yes, I weep with joy at having found my cross, — my cross which the emperor gave me, with his victorious hand as this worthy gentleman says."

"Blessed, then, be my poor old hand which has restored to you so valuable a treasure!" said Rodin, with emotion. Then he added, "*Ma foi!* the day will be a happy one for everybody, us I told you this morning in my letter."

"That letter without any signature?" inquired the soldier, more and more surprised. "Did that letter come from you?"

"Yes, it was I who wrote it. Only, fearing some new plot from the Abbé d'Aigrigny, I was not willing, you must know, to explain myself more clearly."

"Then I shall see the orphans again?"

Rodin made an affirmative nod with his head, full of benevolence.

"Yes, forthwith, — in a moment, perhaps," said Adrienne, with a smile. "Well, was it right when I told you that you had misjudged this gentleman?"

"And why did he not say so when I first saw him?" cried Dagobert, in the fullness of his joy.

"For the very trifling reason, my good friend," answered Rodin, "that your first act upon entering was to endeavour to strangle me."

"True, true! I was too hasty. But still how could it be otherwise, when, up to the present minute, I had always seen you assisting the Abbé d'Aigrigny in his villainy against us; and therefore, naturally enough, my first impulse led me —"

"This young lady," said Rodin, profoundly bowing to Adrienne, — "this dear young lady will tell you how unconsciously I have been made to assist the unprincipled schemes of others; but so soon as the conviction of their base and treacherous designs burst upon my mind, I hastened to quit the wrong road I had taken for the straightforward path of honour and rectitude."

To the eagerly inquiring look of Dagobert, Adrienne returned a look of smiling assent.

"That I did not affix my name to the letter I sent you, my worthy friend, it was because I feared by so doing to excite your doubts of my sincerity; and my only motive for requesting you to come hither, instead of proceeding to the convent, was that, as well as this dear lady, I was apprehensive of your being recognised either by the porter or gardener, and the attempt of the other night might make such a circumstance highly dangerous to you."

"But," said Adrienne, "now I remember Doctor Baleinier is acquainted with all that took place, and even threatened to place M. Dagobert and his son in the hands of justice if I took any proceedings against himself."

"Be under no fear, my dear young lady," replied Rodin; "it will be for you henceforward to dictate, and him to subscribe to the conditions imposed; place implicit reliance in me. As for you, my excellent friend, your troubles are at an end."

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed Adrienne. "An upright and benevolent magistrate has gone to the convent to demand the daughters of General Simon, whom he will immediately conduct hither. But although he concurred with me in thinking it would be better for them to reside with me, I cannot decide upon this step without your consent, for it was to your care their mother entrusted them."

"Oh, mademoiselle," replied Dagobert, "let me thank you from my very heart for this generous offer; my dear children will find a second parent in you. Only after the severe lesson I have had, I must ask your permission not to leave the door of their chamber night or day; and should they accompany you abroad, you must give me leave to follow them at a respectful distance, and the same favour for Killjoy, who has shown himself

a far more watchful guardian than myself. When once the maréchal returns, — and he may be daily expected, — there will be an end to all this anxiety; and my only prayer is that he may take the charge off my hands before fresh troubles arise. God grant he may come quickly!"

"Amen!" responded Rodin, in a firm and determined voice. "I join with you, my worthy friend, in praying for the speedy arrival of the maréchal; but let M. d'Aigrigny beware, for a terrible reckoning will be demanded by the father for all the persecutions his poor children have undergone; and yet heavy as is the catalogue, M. le Maréchal knows not all as yet."

"And have you no fear for the safety of the renegade?" inquired Dagobert, impressed with the idea of the fast approaching meeting between the marquis and Maréchal Simon.

"I have no fears to waste on such cowardly traitors as M. d'Aigrigny," responded Rodin; "and when M. le Maréchal Simon has once returned —"

Then after a pause of several moments, he said:

"Only let M. le Maréchal deign to hear what I have to tell him, and he will be thunderstruck at the conduct of M. d'Aigrigny; and he will then learn that his dearest friends, as well as himself, have been marked out as objects of the deadly hatred of this dangerous man."

"How so?" inquired Dagobert.

"How so?" answered Rodin. "Why, are not you yourself an example of what I assert?"

"I?"

"Do you suppose that chance alone brought about the scene at the inn of the White Falcon, near Leipsic?"

"Who told you what occurred there?" asked Dagobert, struck with surprise.

"Had you engaged in the quarrel into which Morok sought to draw you, you would have fallen into a snare purposely laid to entrap you; and by refusing, you were

then arrested, for want of your papers, and thrown into prison as a vagabond, as well as the poor orphans you were conducting to France. But are you aware that the aim and end of all this violence was to prevent your being here on the thirteenth of February?"

"The more I listen to you," said Adrienne, "the greater is my horror to find to what extent the Abbé d'Aigrigny carried his wickedness, and how widely spread were the means employed to effect his purposes. In truth," continued she, with profound amazement at all she heard, "were it not that you well deserve to be believed —"

"You would be inclined to doubt the truth of what he asserts; is it not so, mademoiselle?" said Dagobert. "That is just my opinion; for, infamous as has been the conduct of this renegade, I yet cannot persuade myself to believe he could be in communication with a wild-beast showman in the most distant part of Saxony. Besides, how could he possibly have known that the children and myself were to pass through Leipsic? No, no, my good sir, this is neither probable nor practicable."

"I am almost inclined to think," replied Adrienne, "that your just abhorrence of the ill practices of the Abbé d'Aigrigny carries you too far, and misleads your judgment, until you attribute to him an almost fabulous extent of power and resources."

After a short silence, during which Rodin alternately regarded Adrienne and Dagobert with a sort of commiserating glance, he said:

"And how should your cross have found its way into the hands of the Abbé d'Aigrigny had he not been in correspondence with Morok?"

"In good truth, sir," replied Dagobert, "the excess of my joy at recovering it put that very natural question out of my head. But tell me, I beg you, by what chance did it fall into your possession?"

"Simply in consequence of these relationships between

M. d'Aigrigny and his agents at Leipsic, which yourself and this dear lady appear to doubt."

"But, then, how came it to pass that, whereas I lost my cross at Leipsic, I find it in your care and keeping in Paris?"

"Answer me this one question. You were arrested at Leipsic for want of the necessary papers and passports, were you not?"

"I was; but I could never imagine by what means both my papers and money disappeared from my bag. I always supposed I had been unfortunate enough to lose them."

Rodin shrugged up his shoulders, and then replied:

"They were stolen from you at the inn of the White Falcon by Goliath, one of the emissaries of Morok, who forwarded his plunder to the Abbé d'Aigrigny, in proof of his having executed the orders given to effect your detention at Leipsic, as well as the young orphans. It was but the day before yesterday I had the key to the whole of this black transaction; both cross and papers were deposited among the records of the Abbé d'Aigrigny, and the papers were of so considerable a bulk that I durst not attempt their removal. Still, hoping to meet you this morning, after the letter I had addressed to you, and well aware what a sacred and beloved relic is his cross in the eyes of an old soldier who served under our idolised emperor, — why, my worthy friend, I will at once confess that I hesitated not to take possession of it in your name, and put it at once in my pocket. For, after all, said I, it is only restoring that which is justly the property of another, and I must not allow my over-scrupulous delicacy to dissuade me from conveying it back to its owner."

"You could not have performed a more praiseworthy action!" said Adrienne; "and I for one, by reason of the deep interest I take in M. Dagobert, feel myself personally grateful to you for acting as you did."

Then pausing for a few seconds, she resumed with much anxiety:

"But tell me, I conjure you, what is the nature of that terrible power with which M. d'Aigrigny seems armed, that he can thus extend his schemes even to foreign lands?"

"Hush!" cried Rodin, in a low whisper, and looking around him with a terrified gaze. "Hush, hush! For the love of heaven question me not on that subject!"

CHAPTER VII.

REVELATIONS.

Mlle. de Cardoville, greatly astonished at Rodin's alarm when she asked him for an explanation as to the very formidable and widely extended power which the Abbé d'Aigrigny exercised, said to him:

"But, sir, what is there so strange in the question that I have just asked of you?"

Rodin, after a moment's silence, looking about him with admirably feigned disquietude, replied, in a low tone:

"Once again, mademoiselle, I entreat you not to interrogate me on so terrible a matter! The walls of this house have ears, as they say vulgarly."

Adrienne and Dagobert looked at each other with increased surprise.

La Mayeux, with the instinct of inconceivable pertinacity, continued to experience a sentiment of invincible mistrust against Rodin. Sometimes she looked at him covertly, endeavouring to penetrate beneath the mask of the man who thus inspired her with dread. One moment the Jesuit met the uneasy look of La Mayeux obstinately fixed upon him, and then he made her a slight, but benevolent, nod of the head, at which the young girl, alarmed at being thus detected, turned away her eyes and shuddered.

"No, no, my dear young lady," continued Rodin, with a sigh, when he saw that Mlle. de Cardoville was aston-

ished at his silence, "do not question me as to the Abbé d'Aigrigny's power."

"But once more, sir," said Adrienne, "why this hesitation in replying to me? What is there to fear?"

"Ah, my dear young lady," said Rodin, with a shudder, "these persons are so powerful, — their animosity is so terrible!"

"Take courage, sir, I owe you too much to permit my aid ever to be wanting to you."

"Oh, my dear young lady," exclaimed Rodin, as though almost offended, "judge of me better, I beseech you. Do you suppose that it is for myself that I fear? No, no, I am too obscure, too inoffensive! But it is you; it is Marshal Simon, and all the other persons of your family, who have everything to fear. Indeed, my dear young lady, I assure you over again, that you must not press me. There are secrets that are injurious to those who possess them."

"But, sir, is it not best to know the dangers with which one is menaced?"

"When one knows the manœuvres of one's enemy, at least one can defend oneself," said Dagobert. "I like an attack in open day better than an ambuscade."

"I must tell you," added Adrienne, "that the few words you have told me inspired me with indescribable uneasiness."

"Then, since it must be so, my dear young lady," replied the Jesuit, appearing to make a great effort with himself, "since you cannot comprehend from my obscure hints, I will be more explicit. But remember," he added, in a serious tone, "remember that your strong solicitation has compelled me to tell you that of which you had, perhaps, better have been ignorant."

"I beg you to speak out, sir, — pray do," said Adrienne.

Rodin, drawing close to Adrienne, Dagobert, and La Mayeux, said to them, with a mysterious air, "Have you

never heard of a powerful association which extends its net over the whole earth, which includes amongst its affiliated brethren the seids and fanatics of all classes of society, which has had, and still has, the ear of kings and grandees, — an all-powerful association which, with a word, elevates its creatures to the most exalted position, and, with a word also, casts them back into the nothingness whence it can alone rescue them?"

"Oh, sir," replied Adrienne, "what can this formidable association be? I never heard it mentioned."

"I believe you, my dear young lady, and yet your ignorance on this subject astonishes me excessively."

"Astonishes you? And wherefore?"

"Because you have lived so long with your aunt and so often seen the Abbé d'Aigrigny."

"I have lived at Madame de Saint-Dizier's hôtel, but not with her, for she inspired me with a legitimate aversion in a thousand ways."

"In truth, my dear young lady, my remark was not just; it was there more than elsewhere that they would have preserved profound silence as to this association; and yet it is owing to it that Madame de Saint-Dizier has enjoyed such strong influence in the world under the last reign. Well, then, now you shall know it. It is the system of this association which renders the Abbé d'Aigrigny so dangerous a man; by it he has been able to watch, pursue, and reach the different members of your family, — those in Siberia, those in India, and others in the midst of the mountains of America; for, as I told you, by chance, the day before yesterday, in looking over the papers of the Abbé d'Aigrigny, I was put on the right scent, and fully convinced of his affiliation with this society, of which he is the most active and intelligent chief."

"But, sir, the name — the name of the society?" inquired Adrienne.

"Well, — it is —" and Rodin paused.

"It is—" said Adrienne, as deeply interested as Dagobert and La Mayeux, "it is—"

Rodin looked around about him, drew by a sign the other actors in this scene still closer to him, and said in a low voice, and laying emphasis on each syllable:

"It is—it is—the Society of Jesus!" and he shuddered.

"The Jesuits!" exclaimed Mlle. de Cardoville, unable to repress a burst of laughter, which was the more hearty, because, after the mysterious and deprecatory precaution of Rodin, she expected a revelation in her opinion infinitely more terrible. "The Jesuits!" she repeated, still laughing; "why, they only exist in books, they are but historical personages, very fearful, I believe; but why thus disguise Madame de Saint-Dizier and M. d'Aigrigny? Such as they are, do they not fully justify my disdain and aversion?"

After having silently listened to Mlle. de Cardoville, Rodin answered with a serious and earnest air:

"Your blindness alarms me, my dear young lady; the past ought to have made you fear for the future; for you, more than any person, have already suffered by the sinister conduct of this society, the existence of which you look at as a dream."

"I, sir?" said Adrienne, smiling, although greatly surprised.

"You!"

"And in what way?"

"Do you ask me, my dear young lady? Do you really ask me,—you, who have been shut up here as a lunatic? Have I still to tell you that the master of this house is one of the most devoted of the lay members of this company, and, as such, the blind instrument of the Abbé d'Aigrigny?"

"Thus," said Adrienne, but without any smile this time, "M. Baleinier—"

"Obeyed the Abbé d'Aigrigny, the most dreaded chief

of this dread society. He uses his genius for evil. But it must be confessed that he is a man of genius; and, therefore, it is that, even out of this abode, you and your family ought to concentrate all your vigilance, all your suspicions on him. For, believe me, I know him; and he does not consider the game as lost yet. You must expect fresh attacks, — no doubt of another nature, but, for that very reason, still more dangerous."

"Luckily you will foresee them, my worthy sir," said Dagobert, "and you will be with us."

"I can do but little, my worthy friend; but that little is at the service of good persons," said Rodin.

"Now," said Adrienne, with a pensive air, completely persuaded by the conviction of Rodin's manner, "now I can understand the inconceivable influence which my aunt exercised over everybody, and which I attributed solely to her connection with powerful persons. I thought it more than probable that she and the Abbé d'Aigrigny were associated with some dark intrigues, of which religion was the veil; but I was far from believing what you now tell me."

"And of how many more things are you still in utter ignorance?" resumed Rodin. "If you knew, my dear young lady, with what art these people surround your mansions with agents who are devoted to them! When they desire to be informed on any particular in which you are concerned, not an action or gesture of yours escapes them. Then, by degrees, they act, — act silently, quietly, and in the dark. They surround you with all possible means and agencies, from flattery to terror; they seduce or alarm you in order to control you, without your consciousness of their authority. Such is their aim; and, it must be allowed, they attain it frequently with most devoted skill."

Rodin spoke with so much sincerity that Adrienne trembled; then, reproaching herself with her fears, she said:

"And yet, no, — no, never; I never can believe in so infernal a power. Once again, I say, the influence of these ambitious priests is of a bygone age. Heaven be praised, they have all disappeared for ever!"

"Yes, they have certainly disappeared, for they know how and when to disperse and disappear under certain circumstances. But it is then, especially, that they are the most dangerous; for the mistrust which they inspire vanishes, and they are veiled in darkness. Oh, my dear young lady, if you knew their frightful skill! In my hatred for all that is oppressive, cowardly, and hypocritical, I had studied the history of this terrible company before I knew that the Abbé d'Aigrigny was a member of it. Oh, what fearful skill is theirs! If you only knew what means they employ! When I tell you that, thanks to their diabolical stratagems, the purest and most devout appearances often conceal most horrible snares —" And Rodin's looks seemed accidentally to fall on La Mayeux; but, seeing that Adrienne did not perceive his insinuation, the Jesuit resumed, "In a word, if you are the object of their pursuits, if it be to their interest to ensnare you, from that instant mistrust all that surrounds you, suspect the most noble attachments, the most tender affections; for these monsters sometimes contrive to corrupt your best friends, and to employ them as auxiliaries against you, — the more to be dreaded, as your confidence is the more blinded."

"It must be impossible," said Adrienne, who revolted at this; "you must exaggerate! No, no; hell has never dreamed of treacheries so horrible!"

"Alas, my dear young lady, one of your relatives, M. Hardy, one of the most frank and generous of men, has been in this way the victim of a most infamous treachery. In fact, do you know what the reading of your ancestor's will and testament has informed us of? Why, that he died the victim of the hatred of these people, and that, at this time, after a hundred and fifty

years' interval, his descendants are still the objects of hatred to this undying society."

"Ah, sir, this terrifies me!" said Adrienne, her blood running cold at the thought. "But is there no defence against such assaults?"

"Prudence, my dear young lady, the most careful reserve, and an endless distrust of all who approach you."

"But such a life is frightful, sir; it is torture to be thus a prey to suspicions, doubts, and perpetual fears."

"Eh, no doubt; and well do these monsters know it! It is in that their strength lies; and they often triumph by the very excess of the precautions which are taken against them. Thus, my dear young lady, and you, my worthy and brave soldier, in the name of all that is dearest to you, beware, and do not give your confidence lightly. You have nearly been their victims, and they will always be your implacable enemies. And you, too, poor and interesting child," added the Jesuit, addressing La Mayeux, "follow my advice. Fear them, and sleep with one eye open, as the proverb says."

"I, sir!" said La Mayeux. "What have I done? What have I to fear?"

"What have you done? Do you not tenderly love this dear young lady, your protectress? Did you not attempt to come to her succour? Are you not the adopted sister of the son of this intrepid soldier, the worthy Agricola? Alas, poor girl, are these not titles sufficient for their hatred, in spite of your obscurity? Ah, my dear young lady, do not think that I exaggerate! Reflect, reflect! Remember what I have told you in reference to the faithful companion in arms of Marshal Simon, relative to his imprisonment at Leipsic! Remember what has occurred to you yourself, who were conducted here in spite of all law and all justice! And then you will see that there is no exaggeration in this picture of the occult powers of this company. Be always

on your guard; and, especially, my dear young lady, in all doubtful cases, have no fear of addressing yourself to me. In three days I have learned enough by my own experience of this mode of action to be able to point out to you a snare, a stratagem, or a danger, and to defend you from it."

"Under such circumstances, sir," replied Mlle. de Cardoville, "and if my gratitude were out of sight, would not my interest point you out as my safest adviser?"

According to the habitual tactics of the sons of Loyola, who sometimes deny their very existence in order to escape from their adversaries, — sometimes, on the contrary, boldly proclaim the active and diffused power of their organisation in order to intimidate the weak, — Rodin had laughed in the teeth of the land-steward of Cardoville, when he had alluded to the existence of the Jesuits; whilst at the convent, in tracing out, as he had done, their means and springs of action, he tried and had succeeded in inspiring Mlle. de Cardoville with a certain amount of alarm, which would gradually increase on reflection, and serve at a later period the sinister projects which he meditated.

La Mayeux experienced still the utmost terror at Rodin; still, when she heard him unmask to Adrienne the sinister power of the Order which he said was so redoubtable, the young work-girl, far from suspecting the Jesuit of the boldness of speaking thus of an association of which he was a member, felt grateful to him, in spite of herself, for the important advice which he had given to Mlle. de Cardoville.

The glance she now gave him (and which Rodin observed also, for he watched the young girl with immovable attention) was full of gratitude and wonder.

Understanding that expression, and desirous of increasing its effect, and endeavouring to eradicate the distrust which had crept into La Mayeux's mind, and to

anticipate a disclosure which must be made sooner or later, the Jesuit appeared to have forgotten something very important, and exclaimed, striking his forehead:

"What was I thinking of?"

Then addressing La Mayeux:

"Do you know, my dear girl, where your sister is?"

Equally abashed and saddened at the question, La Mayeux replied, blushing deeply as she spoke, for she remembered her last meeting with the brilliant Queen-Bacchanal:

"I have not seen my sister for some days, sir."

"Well, my dear girl, she is not very happy at this moment," said Rodin. "I have promised one of her friends to send her some small assistance; and, having spoken to a charitable individual, see what he gave me for her!" And he drew from his pocket a rouleau sealed up, which he handed to La Mayeux, who was as much affected as astonished.

"You have a sister who is unhappy, and I knew nothing about it!" said Adrienne to the workwoman. "Ah, my child, that's wrong!"

"Do not blame her," said Rodin. "In the first place, she did not know that her sister was unhappy, and then she could not ask you, my dear young lady, to interest yourself for her."

And, as Mlle. de Cardoville looked at Rodin with astonishment, he added, addressing himself to La Mayeux:

"Is it not true, my girl?"

"Yes, sir," replied the work-girl, lowering her eyes and blushing again. Then she added, with quickness and anxiety:

"But my sister, sir, where did you see her? Where is she? In what way is she unhappy?"

"It would be too long a tale to tell you now, my dear girl; but go as quickly as you can to the Rue Clovis, to the greengrocer's shop, ask to speak to your sister from M. Charlemagne, or M. Rodin, whichever you please,—

for I am known there under my baptismal as well as my family name, — and you will learn all particulars. Only tell your sister that, if she conducts herself properly, and continues to adhere to her present good resolutions, there are persons who continue to take an interest in her welfare."

La Mayeux, more and more astonished, was about to reply to M. Rodin, when the door opened, and M. de Gernande entered.

The magistrate's countenance was serious, and even sad.

"Where are Marshal Simon's daughters?" exclaimed Mlle. de Cardoville.

"Unfortunately, they have not accompanied me," replied the magistrate.

"And where are they, sir? What has become of them? They were in the convent the day before yesterday!" cried Dagobert, aghast at this complete destruction of his hopes.

Scarcely had the soldier uttered these words, than, profiting by the movement of the actors in this scene, who were grouped closely around the magistrate, Rodin retreated a few steps, reached the door quickly, and withdrew, without any one observing his exit.

Whilst the soldier, thus completely driven to despair, was gazing at M. de Gernande, and awaiting his reply in the deepest anguish, Adrienne said to the magistrate:

"But, sir, when you reached the convent, what answer did the superior make you on the subject of the two dear girls?"

"The superior refused to explain herself, mademoiselle. 'You assert, sir,' she said to me, 'that the young persons you speak of are detained here against their will. Well, then, since the law gives you the right to examine this house, pray exercise that power and search it.' 'But, madame, be so kind as to reply to me positively,' I said to the superior, 'do you declare yourself

completely a stranger to this abstraction of the young girls whom I am here to demand?' 'I have nothing to say on the subject, sir. You say you are authorised to make a search — make it, then!' Unable to obtain any other explanations," added the magistrate, "I have visited the convent in every part, and had every apartment opened. I regret to say I have not found any trace of the young ladies."

"They have conveyed them away to some other place," exclaimed Dagobert; "and who knows? — very ill, perhaps! They will kill them — they will kill them!" he exclaimed, in agonised accents.

"After such a refusal, what can we do? What is next to be thought of? Ah, pray, sir, aid us with your advice — you, our counsellor — our aid!" said Adrienne, turning to speak to Rodin, whom she thought behind her. "What would be —"

Then, perceiving that the Jesuit had suddenly disappeared, she said to La Mayeux, with uneasiness:

"Where is M. Rodin?"

"I do not know, mademoiselle," replied La Mayeux, looking about her; "he is not here."

"It is very singular," said Adrienne, "that he should disappear so suddenly!"

"Didn't I tell you he was a traitor?" exclaimed Dagobert, stamping on the ground with rage. "Ah, they understand each other!"

"No, no," cried Mlle. de Cardoville, "do not think so, although the departure of M. Rodin is exceedingly to be lamented; for in this terrible dilemma, owing to the situation which M. Rodin occupied under M. d'Aigrigny, he might, perhaps, have afforded us very confidential information."

"I assure you, mademoiselle, that I quite relied upon it," said M. de Gernande; "and I returned here not only to inform you of my want of success, but to ask of this worthy and conscientious man, who has boldly

unveiled these odious machinations, to give us all the information in his power in our painful position."

Strange to say, but for some time Dagobert had been so deeply absorbed that he had not paid the slightest attention to what the magistrate said, although on a subject in which he was so much interested. He did not even remark the departure of M. de Gernande, who withdrew, after having promised Adrienne to leave no means untried to learn every particular connected with the disappearance of the two orphan children.

Uneasy at Dagobert's silence, and desirous of leaving the house immediately, and of inducing him to accompany her, Adrienne, after having exchanged a glance full of meaning with La Mayeux, approached the soldier, when rapid footsteps were suddenly heard outside the apartment, and a manly and powerful voice was heard exclaiming impatiently:

"Where is he? Where is he?"

At this voice Dagobert started violently, gave a cry, and was bounding towards the door, when it opened.

Marshal Simon entered.

CHAPTER VIII.

PIERRE SIMON.

Marshal Pierre Simon, Duc de Ligny, was of tall stature, and was plainly dressed in a blue frock coat, buttoned up close to the chin, and in the top buttonhole was a small piece of red riband.

It was impossible to see a physiognomy more frank, more open, and of more chivalrous distinction than the marshal's. His forehead was broad, his nose aquiline, the chin strongly defined, and his features tanned by exposure to the suns of India. His hair, cut very short, was gray about the temples, but his eyebrows were still of jet-black, as well as his large, drooping moustache; his free, bold, and decided carriage evinced his military breeding and tendencies; and a man of the people, a man of war and energy, the warm cordiality of his language breathed benevolence and sympathy. As enlightened as intrepid, as generous as sincere, there was in him most especially a high degree of plebeian pride; and, whilst others were proud of noble birth, he was proud of his obscure origin, because it had been ennobled by the fine character of his father, a stern Republican, and an intelligent and industrious artisan, who had been for forty years the honour, boast, and example of all laborious workmen.

When he accepted with gratitude the aristocratic title with which the emperor had invested him, Pierre Simon had acted like those delicate-minded persons who, receiving with the warmth of friendship a gift perfectly

useless, yet accept it with gratitude, as coming from the hand that presents it.

The religious adoration of Pierre Simon towards the emperor had never been blind; in proportion as his devotion and ardent love for his idol had been instinctive, and, as we may term it, fatal, so was his admiration serious and rational. Far from resembling those swordsmen who love battle only for battle's sake, not only did Marshal Simon admire his hero as the greatest captain in the world, but he admired him, above all, because he knew that the emperor had only made or carried on war in the hopes of one day giving peace to the whole world; and if peace, acceded to by glory and power, is great, fertile, and magnificent, peace accepted by convention is barren, miserable, and dishonourable.

The son of an artisan, Pierre Simon admired the emperor, also, because this imperial *parvenu* had always known how to vibrate gloriously on the popular fibre, and, remembering the people from whom he himself had sprung, he had fraternally invited them to enjoy with him all the pomps of aristocracy and royalty.

The features of Marshal Simon as he entered the chamber gave evidence of the deep feelings which were struggling within his breast, but at the sight of Dagobert a bright flush of joy illumined his manly countenance, as, hurrying with extended arms towards the soldier, he exclaimed:

"My friend! my tried — my faithful friend!"

Poor Dagobert received in silence the warm and grateful pressure of the marshal, who, releasing him from his arms, and fixing on him his earnest and tearful gaze, said, in an agitated tone and with quivering lips:

"You arrived in time to be present on the thirteenth of February, did you not?"

"I did, general; but everything relative to that day is now deferred for a period of four months."

"And my wife — my child?"

A cold shudder shook the iron frame of Dagobert at this question. He drooped his head in mournful silence.

"Are they not here?" inquired Pierre Simon, with more surprise than uneasiness. "I learned at your abode that neither my wife nor child was there, but that I should find you at this house, and without a moment's pause I hastened hither. They are not then here?"

"General," replied Dagobert, growing ghastly pale — "general —" Then, wiping from his brows the large drops of cold perspiration which bedewed them, he strove in vain to frame a speech. His dried lips and parched throat deprived him of all power to utter.

"Speak, for the love of God!" cried Pierre Simon, becoming almost as pallid as the soldier himself. Then, seizing the old man by the arm, he added, "Your words, your manner, fill me with a dread of I know not what. Tell me, what does all this mean?"

At this moment Adrienne advanced, her charming face beaming with soft yet mournful sympathy. Pitying alike the embarrassment of Dagobert and the cruel anxiety of the marshal, she sought to relieve both, and addressing Pierre Simon, in a voice of compassionating gentleness, she said:

"Permit me to introduce myself, at this trying moment, as Adrienne de Cardoville, and still more, as the near relation of your dear children."

Equally struck with the splendid beauty of Adrienne as by her words, Pierre Simon started back with surprise, while, in an agitated manner, he exclaimed:

"You, madame, the relative of — my — children?"

And as he emphatically pronounced the last words he gazed in bewildered inquiry on the countenance of Dagobert.

"Yes, M. le Maréchal," replied Adrienne, quickly, "of your children; and may the affection of those charming twin sisters —"

"Twin sisters!" cried Pierre Simon, interrupting Mlle. de Cardoville with a burst of joy he found it impossible to restrain.

"Two daughters to welcome me, when I had expected but one! Oh, what a double source of happiness must this have been to their dear mother!" Then, addressing Adrienne, he added, "Your pardon, mademoiselle, for so uncourteously omitting to thank you as I ought for the welcome tidings you have afforded me. My only excuse is in my joy at finding, after a separation of seventeen years from my wife, that I have now three claimants on my affection instead of one. Instruct me, I pray you, in the full extent, of the debt of gratitude I owe you. You belong to our family, — I am, doubtless, beneath your hospitable roof, where my wife and children have also found shelter and protection. Is it not so? If you are of opinion that my abrupt appearance may be too much for them, I will wait till they are prepared to receive me. But, mademoiselle, let me entreat of you, who I am sure are as good as beautiful, to take pity on my impatience, and break the news of my arrival as quickly as possible to the three beloved beings I so long to fold to my heart."

Dagobert, more and more agitated, carefully avoided meeting the inquiring glances of the maréchal, while his tall, sinewy frame shook, as though stricken with palsy, while Adrienne, shrinking from the cruel blow she felt must be inflicted on the fond hopes of the doting husband, cast down her tearful eyes, and waited in painful suspense for what must follow.

Surprised at a silence which both astonished and alarmed him, Pierre Simon gazed alternately from the soldier to Mlle. de Cardoville, when, struck by the deep dejection of their countenances, he exclaimed, in a tone of deep distress:

"Dagobert, as you are a man, a husband, and a father, tell me — tell me what is this fearful thing you are concealing from me!"

Thus appealed to, the old soldier sought for words to tell his dreadful tale, but in vain, he could only indistinctly articulate:

"General, — indeed — I —"

"Do you, then, mademoiselle," cried Pierre Simon, "take pity on feelings amounting to agony worse than the most dreadful reality. My former apprehensions return — I fear I know not what — something fatal has occurred. Does any danger threaten my wife or my children? Why are they not here to welcome me? Perhaps they are ill. Oh, speak! I conjure you, speak!"

"Reassure yourself, I pray, M. le Maréchal," said Adrienne, kindly, "your daughters have been slightly indisposed, — the result of their long and fatiguing journey; but there is nothing to apprehend on their account —"

"Gracious Heaven!" interrupted the maréchal; "'tis then my wife who is in danger?"

"Arm yourself with courage, M. le Maréchal," said Mlle. de Cardoville, sorrowfully; "you must henceforward look for happiness in the tender affection of the two interesting beings left to love and console you!"

"General," uttered Dagobert, in a steady, solemn voice, "I quitted Siberia in company of — your daughters only."

"And their mother — their adored mother!" exclaimed Simon, in a tone of thrilling agony.

"The day after her death," replied the old soldier, "I set out with her two children."

"Dead!" cried Pierre Simon, with heartrending grief, "dead! My Eva? Oh, it cannot — cannot be!"

No voice arose in contradiction to the fatal tale, — a solemn silence attested its melancholy truth.

As the full conviction of his misfortune pressed on the mind of the maréchal, he staggered as though his very brain were giving way, supported himself for an instant by holding the back of a chair, then, sinking into the chair itself, concealed his features with both his hands, while the convulsive heaving of his breast abundantly testified the overpowering anguish under which he suffered.

For some time nothing was heard but the stifled sobs which arose from the labouring bosom and overcharged heart of Pierre Simon, who, most passionately loving his wife (for the many reasons detailed at the commencement of this history), had, as it were, by one of those singular compromises which a man, long and cruelly ill-treated by fortune and by fate, is apt to make with destiny, fully promised himself a bright and smiling future to indemnify him for so many years of sorrow and suffering. Like most tender and imaginative persons, Pierre Simon was also a fatalist, and fully reckoned upon his right to expect in the society of his wife and child a double compensation for the severe reverses and privations he had been made to suffer. In direct opposition to that class of persons whom a long succession of calamities renders callous or indifferent, Pierre Simon relied on experiencing a happiness as great as had been his misfortunes; his wife and child were the indispensable, nay the sole desiderata of his earthly hopes, the centre of all his pictures of perfect felicity, which were to compensate for the *triste* passages of his early life; and, had it pleased Heaven to remove his offspring, their mother, tenderly beloved as she was, could no more have satisfied his aching heart, than the two young creatures bequeathed to his charge were able to replace the idolised parent they had lost in his warm affections. Whether this deserve to be considered weakness of mind, or an overexacting affection, we pretend not to declare; we merely wish to establish the fact of

its being so, inasmuch as the destructive and incessant grief occasioned by his irreparable loss exercised a most powerful influence over the future destiny of Maréchal Simon.

Adrienne and Dagobert had bestowed a respectful deference on the overwhelming grief of the bereaved husband, who, when he had given free vent to his grief, raised his fine, manly countenance, changed within the last few minutes to the colour of marble, drew his hand across his red and swollen eyes, rose from his chair, and, addressing Adrienne, said:

"Excuse me, mademoiselle, for thus indulging in your presence in a grief too mighty for my powers of endurance. With your permission, I will retire. I have many painful particulars to inquire from the faithful friend who witnessed the last moments of my wife; let me beg to be conducted to my poor girls — my bereaved and motherless children — " And again the choking sobs of the maréchal extinguished his further utterance.

"Unhappily," replied Mlle. de Cardoville, "although, but a short time since, we fully expected the arrival of your children, our hopes have been disappointed." Pierre Simon looked silently at Adrienne, as though he had either not heard or comprehended her reply. "But pray take courage," added the kind-hearted girl, "we must not yet despair."

"Despair!" repeated the maréchal, mechanically, looking with perturbed and anxious glances from Mlle. de Cardoville to Dagobert. "Gracious God! What fresh blow is in store for me? What should we not despair of?"

"Of seeing your daughters again, M. le Maréchal," said Adrienne; "for the presence and authority of their father will give a fresh force to our researches."

"Researches?" cried Pierre Simon. "Then my children are not here?"

"They are not," said Adrienne, making a violent effort

to terminate the miserable suspense under which the maréchal laboured. "I grieve to say they have been surreptitiously removed from the affectionate care of the worthy man who brought them hither from the very extremity of Russia, and placed in a convent."

"Villain," exclaimed Pierre Simon, advancing towards Dagobert, with flashing eyes and threatening mien, "dearly shall you answer to me for this!"

"Do not blame him," interposed Mlle. de Cardoville; "indeed — indeed, he merits not your displeasure."

"General," said Dagobert, in a firm, though dejected and submissive tone of voice, "I deserve your reproaches. I acted wrong to quit Paris (though compelled to do so by business, in which the dear children's interests were concerned), still I believed them as secure under my wife's care as my own; but, poor creature, her head was fairly turned by her confessor, who persuaded her the children would be better off in a convent than with us. She believed him, and permitted them to be removed to a place chosen by this same confessor. Now they declare at the convent that they know nothing of the young ladies. This is the whole truth of the matter. Do with me what you will, — I shall endure it patiently, and without a murmur."

"This is past belief!" cried Pierre Simon, pointing to Dagobert, with mingled contempt and indignation. "Whom shall I venture to trust since he has so basely deceived me?"

"Ah, M. le Maréchal," interposed Mlle. de Cardoville, "spare your angry reproaches, — believe not what he says; to my knowledge, he risked both life and honour in endeavouring to remove the children from the convent in which they were placed; nor is he the only person whose efforts have failed; for, even a magistrate, spite of the legal authority with which he was invested, failed to effect the deliverance of your children; for neither his firm and decided tone with the superior, nor

the most minute search through every part of the convent, have availed to discover them."

"But where is this convent?" exclaimed Maréchal Simon, assuming an air of proud defiance, while his pale and agitated countenance bespoke the determined purpose of his soul, "Where is it situated? Tell me, that I may hasten to demand my daughters, — they little know of what a parent is capable, whose children thus are stolen from him."

At the moment when Maréchal Simon, with his eyes fixed on the countenance of Dagobert, pronounced these words, Rodin, holding Rose and Blanche by the hand, appeared at the half open door. As the exclamation of the maréchal struck on his ear, he almost started with joy, while a gleam of fiendish pleasure illumined his sinister features, at finding Pierre Simon arrived at a period more opportune than he had ventured to hope for.

Mlle. de Cardoville was the first to perceive the presence of Rodin, and, hastening towards him, she exclaimed:

"Ah, I was not mistaken! Still and ever our providence — our good genius — our guardian angel!"

"My children," said Rodin to the sisters, while he pointed to Pierre Simon, "behold your father!"

"See, M. le Maréchal," cried Adrienne, rushing towards Rose and Blanche, — "see, Heaven restores you your children! Oh, what happiness!"

As Pierre Simon turned around, the sisters threw themselves upon his neck, and for several minutes no sound was heard but mingled sobs of joy, kisses, and affectionate expressions of delight.

"At least, come and enjoy the felicity you have effected," said Mlle. de Cardoville, drying her eyes, and turning towards Rodin, who, standing within the doorway and leaning against one side of it, appeared to contemplate the scene before him with the purest delight and sincerest sympathy.

Dagobert, at the sight of the children led in by Rodin, was so completely overcome by surprise, that he remained as though spellbound; but, at the words of Adrienne, the excess of his gratitude seemed almost to deprive him of his senses, for, suddenly throwing himself at the feet of Rodin, and clasping his hands as though in prayer, he stammered out:

"Thanks, thanks, — a thousand times thanks! You have given me more than life in thus restoring these children!"

"Ah, monsieur," said La Mayeux, stimulated by the universal enthusiasm, "may Heaven reward and bless you for what you have done!"

"My good friends," said Rodin, as though overpowered by the force of his emotions, "this is too much, — in truth, more than I am able to bear. Make my apologies, I pray of you, to M. le Maréchal, and tell him I am more than paid for my trifling service in being permitted to witness his happiness."

"Nay, nay," said Adrienne, "let me beseech you not to quit us till the maréchal is aware of all he owes you. Let him, at least, behold the man to whom we are all so greatly indebted."

"Stay, our universal friend and preserver!" cried Dagobert, striving, with all his energy, to detain Rodin.

"My dear young lady," said Rodin, addressing Adrienne, "you called me but now your Providence, — remember, then, that Providence thinks ever more of the good that remains to be done than of that already accomplished!" Then added he, in a tone of mingled benevolence and cunning, "Would it not be better for me to occupy myself immediately in endeavours to discover Prince Djalma? My task is still unfinished, and the moments are precious. I am thankful to say," continued he, gently freeing himself from the vigorous grasp of Dagobert, "that the events of this day have been as propitious as I could have desired. The Abbé d'Aigrigny

is unmasked; you, my dear young lady, are restored to liberty; my brave soldier here has recovered his valued cross; La Mayeux is assured of a friend and protectress; and M. le Maréchal is permitted to embrace his children. I have very small share in procuring all this, and my reward is a rich one. My heart glows, my conscience approves, and — adieu, my friends, adieu, for the present!"

So saying, Rodin, respectfully and affectionately saluting by a wave of his hand Adrienne, Dagobert, and La Mayeux, disappeared, first by a look directing their attention to Maréchal Simon, who, seated between his two daughters, and alternately caressing and weeping over them, appeared wholly unconscious of what was passing around him.

An hour after this scene Mlle. de Cardoville, La Mayeux, with Maréchal Simon, his daughters, and Dagobert, had quitted the house of Doctor Baleinier.

On terminating this episode, let us add two words of moral as to the position of lunatic asylums and convents.

We have said, and we repeat, that the law which now regulates the superintendence of lunatic asylums appears to us insufficient. Facts recently brought before the tribunals, and other facts of a most important character, which have been confided to us, seem plainly to prove this insufficiency.

No doubt but magistrates have full power to visit lunatic asylums, and this visit is even appointed; but we know from a sure source that the numerous and incessant occupations of the magistrates, whose power to discharge their duties is frequently very inadequate to the amount of those duties, render these inspections so rare that they are scarcely worthy of that appellation.

It appears to us that it would be most useful to create and direct inspections at least every fortnight,

and particularly devoted to the surveillance of lunatic asylums, consisting of a doctor and a magistrate, in order that their investigations should be submitted to a cross-examination.

No doubt justice is never wrong when sufficiently instructed; but there are so many formalities, so many difficulties, and especially when the unfortunate complainant has need to seek its aid, being as he is in a state of suspicion, isolation, and compulsory confinement, and has not out-of-doors one friend to take up his defence and appeal in his name to the constituted authorities!

Is it not, then, the duty of the civil power to anticipate these appeals by periodical visitations fitly appointed?

And what we say of lunatic asylums ought to apply, perhaps, even more strongly, to convents for females, to seminaries, and religious houses filled with large numbers.

Facts also very recent, very plain, and with which all France has rung, have unfortunately proved that violence, sequestrations, barbarous treatment, compulsion of female minors, illegal imprisonment accompanied by torture, were acts which, if not frequent, were at least possible in these religious houses.

It has required singular chances and horrid brutalities to make these detestable actions reach the knowledge of the public. How many other victims have been, and, perhaps, are still buried in these vast, silent mansions, where no profane look ever dares to penetrate, and which, from the immunities conceded to the clergy, escape the surveillance of the civil power?

Is it not deplorable that these houses are not subjected also to periodical visitations, consisting, if it be desired, of a chaplain, a magistrate, or some other person appointed by the municipal authority?

If nothing unlawful is perpetrated, and only what is

humane and charitable allowed in these establishments, which have all the character, and, consequently, all the responsibility of public establishments, why is there this revolt, this fierce indignation of the priest-party, when what they call their franchises are discussed?

There is something beyond the laws deliberated and promulgated at Rome: It is the law of France, the law common to all, which gives protection to all, and which in its turn imposes on all — respect and obedience.

CHAPTER IX.

THE INDIAN IN PARIS.

It was three days since Mlle. de Cardoville had quitted Doctor Baleinier's.

The following scene took place in a small house in the Rue Blanche, where Djalma had been conducted in the name of an unknown protector.

The reader will picture a pretty circular apartment, hung with Indian stuff of pearl-gray ground with purple devices, relieved by threads of gold; the ceiling towards the centre was hidden beneath similar draperies, fastened and drawn together by a thick silken cord; at each end of this cord, which dropped unequally, was suspended, in the form of an acorn, a small Indian lamp of gold filigree exquisitely fashioned.

By one of those ingenious combinations so common in barbarous countries, these lamps served also for perfume-burners; small plates of crystal, blue in colour, and chased down each side with arabesque ornaments, and lighted by a lamp within, shone with an azure so limpid that these golden lamps appeared like constellations of transparent sapphires; light clouds of whitish vapour rose from time to time about the two lamps, and filled the vacant space with balmy odour.

Daylight only entered this salon (it was about two o'clock in the afternoon) by passing through a small conservatory, which was visible through a window of plate glass, which formed the door also, and which was constructed to disappear in the thickness of the wall by

sliding it along a groove made in the floor. A Chinese blind could be lowered at pleasure, and conceal or replace this glass.

Some dwarf palm-trees, musas, and other Indian vegetables, with thick leaves and of a green colour almost metallic, were arranged in clumps in this conservatory, and served as perspective and relief to two large chequered masses of exotic flowers, separated by a small path paved with Japanese blue and yellow tiles, which terminated at the foot of the plate glass door.

The light, already much obstructed by the network of leaves through which it struggled, had a hue of singular softness combined with the blue light of the perfumed lamps and the silvery brightness of the blazing hearth of a tall fireplace of Oriental porphyry.

In this somewhat obscure apartment, strongly impregnated with sweet odours mingled with aromatic perfume of Persian tobacco, a man with brown and hanging locks, wearing a long gown of dark green fastened around his loins with a chequered girdle, was kneeling on a splendid Turkey carpet, carefully refreshing the fire in the golden furnace of a hooka, the flexible and long pipe of which, after having rolled its coils on the carpet like a scarlet serpent with silver scales, terminated between the round and slender fingers of Djalma, who was indolently extended on a divan.

The young prince had his head uncovered, his jet-black, hair with its bluish shades parted down his forehead, fell undulating and soft around his face and neck of antique beauty, and of a warm, transparent hue, like amber or topaz. Leaning on a cushion he reposed his chin on the palm of his right hand, whilst the wide sleeve of his tunic, falling back nearly to the bend of the elbow, showed on his arm, as round as a woman's, the mysterious emblems formerly tattooed in India by the needle of the Strangler.

The son of Kadja-Sing held in his left hand the amber

mouthpiece of his pipe. His tunic of magnificent white cashmere, of which the border was embroidered with a thousand colours, reached to his knees, and was confined around his slim and well-formed waist by the large folds of an orange shawl. The well-turned and symmetrical calf of one of the legs of this Asiatic Antinous, half revealed by a fold of his tunic, was clad in a sort of gaiter, fitting closely, made of crimson velvet embroidered in silver, and hollowed out over the instep, where it met a small slipper of white morocco with a red heel.

Djalma's countenance, at once soft and masculine, expressed that melancholy and contemplative calm habitual to Indians and Arabs, — those happy and privileged individuals, who by a rare mixture unite the meditative indolence of the dreamer with the powerful energy of the man of action, and sometimes delicate, nervous, and as easily excited as women, are at other times as resolute, fierce, and sanguinary as bandits.

And this half feminine comparison applied to the nature of Arabs and Indians, when they are not roused by the excitement of battle or the scent of carnage, may be almost applied to them physically; for if, like high-bred women, they have small heads, hands, and feet, delicate joints, and figures as slender as they are supple, this delicate envelope always covers muscles of steel, and a spring and vigour purely virile.

Djalma's long eyes, like black diamonds set in bluish mother-of-pearl, wandered mechanically from the exotic flowers to the ceiling, and then from time to time he applied the amber of his hooka to his lips; then, after a short inspiration, half opening his red lips strongly defined on the dazzling enamel of his teeth, he breathed forth a small spiral wreath of smoke, freshly aromatised by the rose-water through which it had been drawn.

"Shall I put more tobacco in the hooka?" asked the man who was kneeling on the ground, turning his face

towards Djalma, and displaying the sharp and sinister features of Faringhea the Strangler.

The young prince remained mute; either from his Oriental contempt for certain races he disdained to reply to the métis, or absorbed in his reveries he did not hear him.

The Strangler was silent and crouched on the carpet; there with his legs crossed, his elbows on his knees, his chin on his two hands, and his eyes steadfastly fixed on Djalma, he awaited the reply or the orders of him whose sire was called the Father of the Generous.

How could Faringhea, the sanguinary disciple of Bohwanie, the deity of murder, have accepted or sought for an office so menial? How could this man, whose mind was of no common order, whose persuasive eloquence and determined energy had obtained so many valuable proselytes for the service of the "good work," have brought himself to fulfil the inferior situation he now held? Or what ground was there for expecting that, profiting by the blind confidence of the young prince, the individual in question would respect the life of the son of Kadja-Sing? And, last of all, how would he be enabled to incur the risk of continually encountering Rodin, to whom he was so well known under circumstances by no means advantageous? The conclusion of our history will account for all these seeming contradictions and impossibilities. All that we shall now say on the subject is, that, after a long conversation with Rodin on the preceding evening, the Strangler had departed with serious air and downcast eyes from the presence of his companion.

After a long silence, during which Djalma appeared solely occupied in observing the thin vapour of smoke as it mounted from his hooka and spread itself in the air, without troubling himself to regard Faringhea, he addressed him in that style, at once concise and hyperbolical, so peculiar to the nations of the East, saying:

"The hour is past, — he of the kind heart comes not. He will come yet. His word is his word."

"You have spoken well, my lord," answered Faringhea, in an approving tone; "when the good man came three days ago to visit you in this house, whither some wretches for their own evil purposes had caused you to be conveyed in a deep slumber produced by vile drugs (to which state I, your faithful and devoted follower, had likewise been reduced), he said to you, 'The unknown friend who sent to fetch you from the Château de Cardoville sends me to you, prince. Rely on me, — follow me without fear; a dwelling worthy of your rank and merits is provided for you.' Then he said, 'Promise me not to quit this house until you see me again; your safety requires it. In three days' time I will return; you will then be at liberty to act as you please.' You agreed to do as he wished you, my lord, and, during the last three days, you have not once left this house."

"Still, I wait the coming of the old man with much impatience," replied Djalma, "for this solitude wearies and oppresses me; there must be so many fine and beautiful things to see in Paris."

Djalma ceased speaking, and a second time relapsed into a deep reverie.

After several minutes passed thus, the son of Kadja-Sing suddenly exclaimed, in a tone at once haughty, impatient, and listless:

"Let me hear more words from you!"

"Of what shall I discourse to my lord?"

"Of what you will," answered Djalma, with contemptuous indifference, and fixing his half closed eyes on the ceiling. "I am pursued incessantly by one thought, — one idea. I wish to be relieved of it. Speak, then, that my mind may receive fresh images."

Faringhea cast a scrutinising glance on the features of the young Indian, which were suffusedwith a faint red.

"My lord," said the métis, "I guess your thought. Your torment is revealed to my mental vision."

Djalma shook his head without looking at the Strangler, who resumed:

"My lord thinks of the lovely women of Paris."

"Silence, slave!" exclaimed Djalma, turning abruptly on his sofa, as though some painful wound had been touched to the quick.

Faringhea said no more.

At the end of a few moments Djalma, throwing from him the pipe of his hooka, and concealing his eyes with his hands, exclaimed:

"Your words are preferable to your silence. Accursed be my thoughts, and equally accursed the inclination which calls up such fancies!"

"And why should my lord seek to fly his thoughts? You are now nineteen years of age. Your youth has been passed either in war or in prison; and, until the present hour, you have remained as unconscious of the power of love as our fellow traveller, the young Christian priest Gabriel."

Although Faringhea had in no way departed from his usual respectful and deferential tone, yet the prince felt a slight irony pervade the words of the métis, more particularly when he alluded to his ignorance of the tender passion.

Djalma replied, in a tone at once haughty and severe:

"I would not pass for a mere barbarian among the civilised people with whom I now am; and, therefore, I rejoice that my heart is as virgin snow on which no impression has yet been made."

"My lord speaks riddles to his servant."

"I would win and woo a woman pure and innocent as was my mother when my father received her to his arms, and here to obtain one like her we must be chaste and pure ourselves."

At this idea Faringhea could not conceal a sardonic smile.

"And wherefore dost thou laugh, slave?" demanded the young prince, imperiously.

"I laughed, my prince, because among civilised nations nothing would excite more ridicule than the idea of a person marrying with such primitive notions of virgin innocence."

"Thou liest, slave! He would be ridiculed only should he espouse a wife less pure than himself."

"The only difference in such a case would be that, instead of mere ridicule, he would be tormented to madness by the pitiless raillery of all around him."

"'Tis false! 'tis false! or, if true, where learnedst thou this?"

"I have seen the women of this country, both in the Isle of France and at Pondicherry, my lord. Besides which I learned much during our voyage from a young French officer with whom I conversed almost as much as yourself did with the Christian priest Gabriel."

"Then it would seem that, like our sultans in their harems, the people of the civilised world exact from their females a purity they do not themselves possess?"

"In general, those who have the least in their own characters are most scrupulous in requiring it from their wives."

"To demand that which is not equally given is the conduct of a master to a slave. And how can such sentiments influence a free and generous nation?"

"My lord forgets that the law-maker is often the law-breaker, and that might is right; just the same as with us, my lord, where the stronger party takes what he desires and leaves the weaker to be satisfied with what they can obtain."

"And what do the females in this case?"

"My lord, they consider they have well performed their duty when they seek to prevent their husbands

from rendering themselves ridiculous by any absurd protestations of immaculate innocence and virtue before their marriage."

"And for the wife who deceives — whe betrays her husband's honour," said Djalma, springing suddenly up, and fixing on Faringhea a fierce glance, while his eyes glittered with fury, "how treat they such? Do they slay them?"

"Even so, my lord; as with us, a woman caught in crime washes it out in blood."

"Since, then, these civilised people are equally despotic with ourselves, why do they not shut up their wives as we do ours to compel their fidelity?"

"Because, my lord, they are as civilised as barbarous, and as barbarous as civilised."

"There is much justice in your words, if they be true," replied Djalma, with a pensive air. Then he added with considerable excitement, and adopting in a certain degree the figurative and mystical language of his country:

"In truth, slave, what thou sayest afflicts me greatly; for as two drops of heavenly dew mixing together in the calyx of a flower, so are two hearts mingling in a holy, chaste, and virgin love; like unto two rays of fire, uniting into one bright and imperishable flame, are those glowing joys, those unfading delights, which wait upon two tender lovers joined in marriage bond."

When Djalma spoke of the modest joys of the soul with inexpressible charm, whilst he depicted a less ideal happiness, he trembled perceptibly, his nostrils expanded, the pale gold hue of his complexion became flushed, and the young prince fell back in deep reflection.

Faringhea, having remarked this latter emotion, resumed:

"And if, like the proud and bright king-bird[1] of our

[1] A variety of the bird of paradise, very peculiar in its habits and instincts.

country, the sultan of our woods, you should prefer numerous and varied pleasures to sole and solitary loves, — young, handsome, rich as you are, monseigneur, if you seek for seductive Parisian females, you know, those lovely phantoms of your dreams, those charming houris of your nights, if you cast on them looks that resemble a defiance, suppliant as a prayer or burning as a desire, do you not think that every half downcast eye will inflame at your glances of fire? Then there will not be the monotonous delights of a single love, — the heaviest chain in our existence. No, there will be the thousand delights of the harem, but that harem peopled with free and proud women whom happy love will render your slaves. Pure and self-restrained hitherto, you will not now commit excess. Then, believe me, ardent and magnificent, it is you, son of our land, who will become the love, the pride, the idolatry of these women; and these women, the most attractive in the world, will soon have eyes, and looks, and passion, but for you!"

Djalma had listened to Faringhea with anxious silence. The expression of the young Indian's features had completely altered; they no longer displayed the melancholy and dreamy youth, invoking the holy memory of his mother, and finding only in the dew of heaven, in the calyx of flowers, images sufficiently pure to paint the chastity, the love he dreamed of; it was not even the young man blushing with modest ardour at the thoughts of the delights of a legitimate union. No, no, the incitements of Faringhea had suddenly lighted up a subterranean fire. The burning countenance of Djalma, his eyes by turns sparkling and closed, the deep and echoing aspiration of his chest, betokened the fire in his blood and the excitement of his passions, the more energetic as they had been until then utterly repressed.

In a moment darting from the divan, active, vigorous, and light as a young tiger, Djalma seized Faringhea by the throat, exclaiming:

"Your words burn like poison!"

"Monseigneur," said Faringhea, without offering the slightest resistance, "your slave is your slave."

This submission disarmed the prince.

"My life belongs to you," said the métis.

"'Tis mine belongs to thee, slave!" exclaimed Djalma, repulsing him. "This moment I was hanging at thy lips, swallowing thy daring and dangerous lies."

"Lies, monseigneur! Only do you appear among these women, and their looks will confirm my words."

"These women love me! Me, who have only lived hitherto in war and in the forests?"

"When they remember that, so young, you have already had your bloody chases of men and tigers, they will adore you, monseigneur."

"Thou liest!"

"I tell you, monseigneur, when they see your hand, which, as delicate as their own, has yet been so often dipped in the blood of your enemies, they will kiss it; and kiss it again when they think that in our forests with your loaded carbine and poniard between your teeth, you have smiled at the roars of the lion and the panther, for whom you lay in wait."

"But I am a savage — a barbarian —"

"And, therefore, they will be at your feet; they will seem at once frightened and charmed when they reflect on all the violence, all the fury, all the passion of jealousy, excitement, and love, to which a man of your blood, your youth, and your ardour will give way. To-day, soft and tender; to-morrow, gloomy and fierce; next day, ardent and impassioned; such will you be, such should you be, to attract them. Yes, yes; let a cry of rage escape between two kisses, let a dagger gleam between two caresses, let them but be frightened, exhausted, palpitating between love and fear, and you will be to them, not a man but a god!"

"Dost think so?" said Djalma, carried away, in

spite of himself, by the wild eloquence of the Strangler.

"You know — you feel that I speak the truth," exclaimed Faringhea, extending his arms towards Djalma.

"Yes, indeed," replied Djalma, with eye of flame and expanded nostrils, as he paced up and down the apartment, as it were, by wild leaps and bounds, "I do not know if I am in my senses, or if I am drunk, but it seems as though you had spoken truly; yes, I feel it, I shall be loved with madness, with fury, because I shall love with madness and fury. They will tremble with pleasure and fear, because I myself, whilst I think of it, tremble with happiness and dread. Slave, thou sayest truly; and this love will be something overwhelming and terrific."

As Djalma spoke he was resplendent in his display of excited sense. It was a rare sight, — a man having reached, pure and self-restrained, an age when the instincts of love, which the Almighty has so admirably engrafted on his creatures, begin to develop themselves in their all-powerful energy, instincts which repressed, falsified, or perverted, may destroy the reason, or turn it to unbridled dissipation or horrid crimes, but which directed towards a great and noble passion may and ought, by their very violence, to raise a man through devotion and tenderness to the very extreme limits of the ideal.

"Ah, this woman, this woman, before whom I shall tremble, and who will tremble before me! Where is she?" exclaimed Djalma, in increased excitement. "Shall I ever, ever find her?"

"One is a difficulty, monseigneur," said Faringhea, with sardonic coolness. "He who seeks for one woman rarely finds her in this land; but he who seeks women will be embarrassed to make his choice."

At the moment when the métis made this important

reply to Djalma there was seen to stop at the small garden gate of this house, a door which opened upon a deserted corner, a chariot of extreme elegance, with blue body on a white carriage, picked out with blue also. This chariot was drawn by two splendid blood bay horses with black manes; the mountings of the harness were silver, as were the buttons of the servants, who wore a blue livery with white collars. On the hammer-cloth, of blue also, and trimmed with white fringe, as well as on the panels of the doors, were the coat-of-arms in a lozenge, without crest or coronet, as is usual on the carriages of single ladies.

There were two females in this chariot, Mlle. de Cardoville and Florine.

CHAPTER X.

THE SLEEPING APARTMENT.

In order to explain the arrival of Mlle. de Cardoville at the garden door of the house occupied by Djalma, it is necessary to cast a retrospective glance over certain previous events.

Mlle. de Cardoville, on quitting Doctor Baleinier's house, had established herself in her abode in the Rue d'Anjou. For several of the last months of her residence with her aunt, Adrienne had been secretly fitting up and furnishing this house, the splendour and elegance of which had been materially increased by all the marvels of taste and art from the pavilion of the Hôtel de Saint-Dizier.

The world thought it very extraordinary that a young lady of the age and rank of Mlle. de Cardoville should have determined on living alone, free, and keeping house like a bachelor long since of age, a young widow, or an emancipated minor.

The world appeared to be ignorant that Mlle. de Cardoville possessed what men who have reached their majority, or a majority twice told, do not always possess, — a firm and decided character, a lofty imagination, a generous heart, and very right and just common sense.

Judging that she should require for the direction of her servants and the superintendence of her household persons of fidelity, Adrienne had written to the land-steward of the Cardoville estate and his wife, old servants of the family, to come instantly to Paris; intending M.

Dupont to fulfil all the functions of a steward, and his wife, those of housekeeper. An old friend of Mlle. de Cardoville's father, the Comte de Montbron, a remarkably high-spirited old gentleman and formerly a leader in the fashionable world, and always a great connoisseur in matters of taste, had advised Adrienne to play the princess and have a squire; introducing to her, as fitted for that office, a man very well educated and past the prime of life, who, being passionately fond of horses, after having ruined himself in England, at Newmarket, Epsom, and Tattersall's, had been completely reduced, as frequently happens to gentlemen in that country, to drive a four-horse coach, finding in that occupation a means of getting an honest living, and also of gratifying his passion for horses. Such was M. de Bonneville, the protégé of the Comte de Montbron. His age and knowledge of the world were such as to give him authority to attend Mlle. de Cardoville on horseback; he could, better than any one, superintend her stables and the keeping up of her carriages. Consequently he accepted the employment with gratitude; and, thanks to his enlightened zeal, the turnout of Mlle. Cardoville rivalled the most elegant in Paris.

Hebe, Georgette, and Florine were all again in attendance on their young lady.

The last had been in the service of the Princesse de Saint-Dizier, in order to keep up her character of spy to the profit of the superior of the convent of Ste. Marie; but when the Rennepont affair took the new turn given to it by Rodin, it was resolved that Florine, if it could be so contrived, should return to her old service with Mlle. de Cardoville, this post of confidence placing this miserable girl in a position to render important and dark services to those who held her fate in their hands, and constrained her to this sort of infamous treachery.

Unfortunately, everything had tended to favour this machination.

We know that Florine, in an interview with La Mayeux a few days after Mlle. de Cardoville had been confined at Doctor Baleinier's, yielding to a feeling of remorse, had given the little workwoman very useful advice in the interests of Adrienne, by desiring that Agricola should not hand over to Madame de St. Dizier the papers he had found in the secret panel in the pavilion, and to trust them to no one but Mlle. de Cardoville herself, who, told of this subsequently by La Mayeux, felt her confidence in and interest for Florine redoubled by this fact, and took her back into her service with almost gratitude, employing her in an affair that was almost confidential, namely, the superintendence of the arrangements of the house engaged for Djalma's dwelling.

As to La Mayeux, yielding to the solicitations of Mlle. de Cardoville, and finding that she could no longer be useful to Dagobert's wife, of whom we shall speak by and by, she had consented to remain in the hôtel of the Rue d'Anjou with Adrienne, who, with that sound sagacity which marked her character, had entrusted to the little sempstress, who also served her as a secretary, the department of assistance and almsgiving.

Mlle. de Cardoville had at first thought of keeping La Mayeux with her simply as her friend, desirous of thus honouring and exalting her honesty in labour, resignation in sorrow, and intelligence in poverty; but, knowing the natural dignity of the young girl, she feared, and with reason, that, in spite of the extreme delicacy with which her sisterly hospitality might be offered to La Mayeux, she would only perceive in it charity in disguise. Adrienne therefore preferred, whilst she treated her quite as a friend, to give her a confidential occupation. In this way the nice sensibility of the sempstress was not affected, since she earned her livelihood by fulfilling duties which were most gratifying to her charitable and sympathising nature.

In truth, no one was better qualified than La Mayeux to accept the holy mission confided to her by Adrienne; her severe experience of misfortune, the excellence of her pure soul, the elevation of her mind, her vast activity, her penetration into the painful secrets of the unfortunate and suffering, and her intimate knowledge of the poor and laborious classes, all bespoke with what tact and good sense the excellent creature would second the generous intentions of Mlle. de Cardoville.

We will now allude to several circumstances which had on this day preceded Mlle. de Cardoville's arrival at the garden door of the house in the Rue Blanche.

Although it was ten o'clock in the morning, the shutters of Adrienne's sleeping-room, hermetically closed, did not allow a ray of daylight to penetrate into the apartment, which was only lighted by a spherical lamp of Oriental alabaster, suspended from the ceiling by three long silver chains.

The chamber, which had a dome, was arranged like a tent in eight divisions. From the top to the ground it was hung with white silk, covered with long white muslin draperies, puffed out and kept along the sides of the wall by bands, fastened at certain intervals by large ivory *paterœ*.

Two doors, also of ivory, elaborately inlaid with mother-of-pearl, led, the one to the bath and the other to the toilet-room, — a sort of small temple raised to the worship of Beauty, and furnished as it had been in the pavilion of the Hôtel Saint-Dizier.

Two other divisions of the room were occupied by windows, completely concealed by draperies. In front of the bed there was (enclosing dog-irons of carved and massive silver) a Pendelic marble chimneypiece, a real snow of crystal, on which were carved two exquisite caryatides, and a frieze of birds and flowers. Above this frieze, and cut transparently in the marble, with

marvellous delicacy, was a sort of basket, of oval shape and elegant design, which supplied the place of the mantelpiece, and was ornamented with a mass of red camelias, whose leaves of a brilliant green, and flowers of light carmine hue, were the only colours which would have justly harmonised with the virgin whiteness of this charming retreat.

Then, half environed by the waves of white muslin, which fell from the dome like light clouds, was seen the very low bed, with its feet of ivory richly sculptured, and resting on the ermine carpet which decked the floor. Except a plinth, also of ivory, beautifully carved, and decorated with mother-of-pearl, the bed was entirely lined with white satin, wadded and worked like a vast scent-bag.

The cambric curtains trimmed with Valenciennes lace, being a little disturbed, revealed the end of a mattress covered with white silk, and the corner of a light watered silk quilt; and in the apartment an equal and cold regulated temperature was kept up like that of a fine spring day.

By a singular scruple, arising out of the same sentiment as that which had made Adrienne inscribe on a gem of goldsmith's work the name of the author instead of that of the seller, she had chosen that all these objects, which were so sumptuous and refined, should be made by artisans chosen from amongst the most intelligent, most industrious, and most honest of their class, to whom she had supplied the raw material, so that they could add to the price of their handiwork the amount of profit which the dealers in speculating on their labours would have added; and this increase of gain, which was very considerable, had afforded much happiness and ease to a hundred necessitous families, who, thus blessing Adrienne's munificence, gave her, as she said, the right to enjoy her luxury as an action that was right and good.

Nothing could be more fresh, more charming to see, than the interior of this sleeping-chamber.

Mlle. de Cardoville had just awakened, and was reposing in the midst of these waves of muslin, lace, cambric, and white silk, in an attitude full of softness and grace. During the night she never wore any covering on her splendid golden hair (a certain mode by which to preserve it in all its beauties, according to the Greeks). At night her women arranged the long curls of her silky locks in sundry flat tresses, with which she formed two long and thick bandeaux, which, falling low enough, almost entirely concealed her small ear, of which only the rosy tip was visible, and then were intermingled with the large knot twisted up at the back of her head.

This head-dress, borrowed from the antique Greek, suited the pure and delicate features of Mlle. de Cardoville admirably, and seemed to make her look so youthful, that, instead of being eighteen years old, she seemed hardly fifteen. Her hair thus gathered closely about her temples lost its light and brilliant hue, and would have appeared almost brown had it not been for the golden hues which played here and there in the undulation of her tresses.

Plunged in a matutinal torpor, whose warm drowsiness is so propitious to soft reveries, Adrienne was reclining on her pillow, her head somewhat bent, which heightened the ideal contour of her naked neck and shoulders; her smiling lips, moist and rosy, were, like her cheeks, as cool as if she had just bathed them in frozen water; her snowy lids half concealed her large dark brown and soft eyes, which now gazed languidly on vacancy and now rested complacently on the red flowers and green leaves of the basket of camelias.

Who can depict the unutterable serenity of Adrienne's awaking, — the awaking of a soul so lovely and chaste, in a body so chaste and lovely, — the awaking of a heart as pure as the fresh and balmy breath of youth

which undulated in her virgin bosom, as virgin white as "unsunned snows?"

The mingled thoughts, which, since her waking, seemed gently to agitate Adrienne, absorbed her more and more. Her head was bent over her bosom, and her beautiful arms hung down upon the couch, whilst her features, without becoming saddened, yet assumed an expression of touching melancholy.

Her most anxious desire was accomplished, — she was about to live independent and alone; but her affectionate, delicate, expansive, and wonderfully perfect nature perceived that God had not gifted her with all these treasures that they should be concealed in a cold and selfish solitude! She felt all that love could inspire of the great and the beautiful, both to herself and to him who should be worthy of her.

Full of reliance in the strength and nobility of her character, proud of the example which she desired to set to other women, knowing that all eyes were fixed on her with envy, she only felt perhaps too much self-confidence; and, far from having any distrust that she should make an ill or improper choice, she only feared that she should not find a fit selection to choose from, so purified was her taste. If, moreover, she should meet with her ideal, she had a mode of scrutiny so strange and yet so just, so extraordinary and yet so well-ordered as to the independence and dignity which (in her opinion) women ought to maintain with respect to man, that, inexorably determined to make no concession on that point, she asked herself if the man of her choice would ever accept the conditions (until then unheard of) which she should impose upon him.

Recalling to her memory the possible pretenders whom, up to this period, she had met in the world, she recollected the picture, so unfortunately correct, which Rodin had traced with caustic severity, when talking of men who might offer. She remembered,

too, and not without a certain degree of pride, the encouragement which that artful man had given her, not in flattering her, but in urging her to pursue the accomplishment of a design that was really so great, generous, and admirable.

The current or the caprice of Adrienne's thoughts soon led her to think of Djalma.

Whilst she congratulated herself for fulfilling towards this relative of royal blood the duties of a royal hospitality, the young girl was far from making the young prince the hero of her future destiny.

And she still further argued, and not without reason, that this half savage, being possessed of passions which, if not absolutely unconquerable, were as yet unconquered, must inevitably be doomed to pass through many severe ordeals, and to undergo the most complete transformation, as regarded his tastes, views, pursuits, and ideas. Now, as Mlle. de Cardoville was by no means of a masculine nature, neither did she possess the very smallest liking for notoriety or exercising sway, she felt no inclination to take upon herself the civilisation of the young Indian; therefore, in spite of the interest she took in him, or, rather, from that very interest, she had firmly resolved not to make herself known to him till two or three months should have elapsed; and still further determined, even if chance should make him acquainted with their relationship, not to receive him at her own house. Her wish was, if not to try him, at least, to leave him free master of his actions and inclinations, that he might take his own unfettered bias, whether for good or evil. Still unwilling to abandon him, all defenceless as he was, to the perils of a Parisian life, she had taken the Comte de Montbron into her confidence, and besought of him to introduce Prince Djalma into the best society of Paris, and to afford him the benefit of the count's personal experience and valuable advice in all matters relative to a favourable début in the gay world.

M. de Montbron had lent a ready acquiescence to the request of Mlle. de Cardoville, feeling, as he said, the greatest possible pleasure in presenting his foreign novice to the first company Paris contained, and to put him in competition with the most polished *élégants* of the day, as a candidate for the smiles and favour of the Parisian belles; offering to bet to any amount on the success of his wild and uncivilised protégé.

"For my own part, my dear count," said Mlle. de Cardoville, "my resolution is not to be shaken. You have yourself told me of the effect Prince Djalma's appearance in the fashionable world will produce. An Indian of nineteen years, possessed of surpassing beauty, proud and unbroken as the lion of the forest, — he will be, you say, as new as extraordinary; and, doubtless, will quickly be marked down as worthy the pursuit of our civilised coquettes, who will seek to attract his notice and engage his attention with a perseverance and spirit which make me fear for our young friend's chance of escape from their wiles. Now, seriously, my dear count, I feel not the slightest inclination to enter the lists with the many lovely females who will unhesitatingly throw themselves within reach of the claws of your young barbarian, in whom I take a deep interest; in the first place, because he is my relative; in the second, because he is young, brave, and handsome; and, thirdly and principally, because he is not disfigured by wearing our horrible European costume. These claims on my regard are not, however, sufficiently powerful to induce me to change my mind for the present; added to which, the good old philosopher, my recently acquired friend, has given me some very excellent advice concerning this young Indian, which has even been approved and confirmed by you, my dear count, who, certainly, are not the least bit of a philosopher, which is, for some time only to receive visitors, and not to accept of any invitations; by which means I shall effectually avoid the

awkwardness of meeting my royal relative, and, at the same time, enable me carefully to select even my most indifferent guests; for, as my establishment is well appointed, and my position in society quite original, the curious of both sexes will be but too happy to be admitted to a dwelling where they flatter themselves so many scandalous little facts may be gleaned, touching its eccentric mistress and her equally singular tastes and habits, — from all of which I promise myself infinite amusement."

And when M. de Montbron inquired whether the poor, young, royal tiger were doomed to be banished for a long period from her, Adrienne replied:

"As nearly all the persons to whom you will have introduced him are among my visiting acquaintances, I shall thus be enabled, in a manner most amusing to myself, to hear the various opinions entertained respecting my royal cousin. If certain individuals of your sex speak highly of him, while some among my own find infinite fault with him, I shall have great hopes of his being all I desire to find him. In a word, the opinion I shall arrive at by separating the true from the false (and you may trust to my sagacity to be enabled to do so), will prolong or abridge what you are pleased to call the exile of my royal protégé."

Such were the positive intentions of Mlle. de Cardoville up to the very morning in which, in company with Florine, she repaired to the house inhabited by him. In fact, she had firmly resolved not to make herself known to him before the expiration of the next two or three months.

After having, on the morning we have been describing, long pondered over the probabilities and chances of finding what her heart desired, Adrienne fell into a deep and fresh train of thought.

Redolent with all the charms of youthful beauty, the

fascinating being we are portraying heaved a gentle sigh, as though struck by some new and mournful idea, threw her white arms languidly over her head, and, turning her cheek on her pillow, lay for several minutes as though entranced, absorbed, in the vastness of her thoughts. Thus extended, motionless, beneath the delicate coverings which enfolded her graceful form, she might have been taken for some admirable work of sculpture, half revealed beneath a bed of snow.

All at once Adrienne started up, passed her hand lightly over her forehead, and rang for the attendance of her women. As the silver sounds issued from the bell the two doors of ivory gently opened, and Georgette appeared at the threshold of the dressing-room, while Lutine, the beautiful little black and tan spaniel, with its golden collar, sprung forward, and, with loud and glad barkings, welcomed the waking of its mistress. On the threshold of the bath-chamber stood Hebe.

At the end of this apartment, lighted only from the top, and covered over with a carpet of green morocco chequered with golden wreaths, stood a large crystal bath formed like a lengthened shell. The only joinings in this masterpiece of elegance were concealed beneath the graceful twinings of the wreaths of silver flowers springing upwards from the pedestal of the bath, also formed of the most exquisitely carved silver, and representing children sporting with dolphins amid branches of natural coral and azure shells.

Nothing could have produced a more smiling, light, and tasteful appearance than this mixture of bright scarlet with the sea-shells, contrasting so chastely with the dead-silver ground. The sweet balsamic odours which arose from the clear, warm, and perfumed element, already prepared in the crystal cone, diffused themselves throughout the room, and entered the sleeping apartment like a thin, vapoury dew.

As Adrienne observed Hebe in her pretty and becom-

ing costume, standing with a long white wrapper thrown across her round and dimpled arm, she said:

"Where is Florine, my good girl?"

"She has been down-stairs these two hours, madame. She was sent for upon some very important and pressing business."

"Do you know who sent for her?"

"The young person you employ as your secretary, madame. She went out very early this morning, and, immediately upon her return, asked to see Florine, who immediately went to her, and has not since returned."

"No doubt this absence is relative to some important affair my amiable almoner has in hand," said Adrienne, smiling with pleasure at the thoughts of all the good she should be enabled to effect through the medium of La Mayeux. She then beckoned Hebe to approach the bed.

About two hours afterwards, Adrienne, dressed with her usual taste and elegance, dismissed her women, and requested to see La Mayeux, whom she always treated with marked deference, and always received alone.

The young sempstress entered, pale, agitated, and trembling, saying, in a voice unsteady from powerful emotion:

"Ah, mademoiselle, my presentiments were but too well founded. You are betrayed."

"Of what presentiments are you speaking, my dear girl, and who is betraying me?"

"M. Rodin!" replied La Mayeux.

CHAPTER XI.

DOUBTS.

When Mlle. de Cardoville heard the accusation made by La Mayeux against Rodin, she looked at the young girl with renewed astonishment.

Before we continue this scene, let us say that La Mayeux had thrown off her old miserable garments, and was dressed in black, with as much simplicity as good taste. This colour of sorrow seemed to announce her renunciation of all human vanities, the eternal mourning of her heart, and the austere duties which her devotion to the misfortunes of others imposed upon her. With this black gown, La Mayeux wore a large falling collar, as white and neat as her little gauze cap with gray ribands, which, exposing her two bands of beautiful brown hair, surrounded her pale face, with its soft blue eyes. Her long and meagre hands, protected from the cold by gloves, were not as they had been, mottled and violet-coloured, but of a whiteness almost transparent.

The agitated features of La Mayeux expressed extreme disquietude, and Mlle. de Cardoville, excessively surprised, exclaimed:

"What do you say?"

"Mademoiselle, M. Rodin is betraying you!"

"He! Impossible —"

"Ah, mademoiselle, my presentiments did not deceive me."

"Your presentiments?"

"The first time I was in M. Rodin's presence I was,

in spite of myself, overcome with dread. My heart was pained to the core, and I was frightened for you, mademoiselle."

"For me!" said Adrienne; "and why not for yourself, my dear friend?"

"I do not know, mademoiselle; but such was my first sensation. And this alarm was so invincible that, in spite of the benevolence which M. Rodin evinced for my sister, he still inspired me with fear."

"That is very strange. No one understands better than I do the almost irresistible influence of sympathies and aversions; but in this instance — but —" added Adrienne, after a moment's consideration, "no matter. Tell me how these suspicions have been converted into certainty to-day?"

"Yesterday I went to my sister, Céphyse, with the succour which M. Rodin had given me for her in the name of a charitable person. I did not find Céphyse in the house of the friend who had sheltered her, and I requested the portress of the house to tell my sister that I would go again this morning. I did so, — but I must ask your pardon, mademoiselle, for some necessary details —"

"Speak — speak, my friend."

"The young girl who has received my sister at her lodgings," continued poor La Mayeux, very much embarrassed, casting down her eyes, and blushing deeply, "does not lead the most correct life in the world. An individual whom she has joined in several parties of pleasure, called M. Dumoulin, had told her M. Rodin's real name, who occupied a small apartment in the same house, where he gave his name as M. Charlemagne."

"He told us as much at M. Baleinier's; and yesterday, again, referring to the circumstance, he explained to me the necessity he was under, for certain reasons, of having this retired lodging in this remote quarter, — reasons which were most satisfactory to me."

"Well, then, yesterday M. Rodin had a visit there from M. the Abbé d'Aigrigny."

"The Abbé d'Aigrigny!" cried Mlle. de Cardoville.

"Yes, mademoiselle; and he remained for two hours shut up with M. Rodin."

"My dear girl, they must have deceived you."

"This is what they told me, mademoiselle. The Abbé d'Aigrigny had called on the previous evening to see M. Rodin, and not finding him, left his name with the portress, written on paper, as well as these words, 'I shall call again in two hours.' The young girl I have named to you, mademoiselle, saw this paper; and as everything connected with M. Rodin seems very mysterious, she had the curiosity to watch for M. the Abbé d'Aigrigny, in the porter's lodge, in order to see him, and two hours afterwards he returned, and found M. Rodin within."

"No, no," said Adrienne, starting; "it must be impossible, — it is an error."

"I do not think so, mademoiselle; for knowing how important this discovery was, I begged the young girl to give me, as nearly as possible, the Abbé d'Aigrigny's description."

"Well?"

"The Abbé d'Aigrigny," said she, "is about forty years of age, tall and erect, dressed very plainly, but with care; his eyes are gray, very large and penetrating; his eyebrows thick, his hair chestnut, his face very closely shaved, and his whole appearance striking."

"This is true," said Adrienne, unable to believe what she heard. "The description is most accurate."

"Desirous of having the most precise details," added La Mayeux, "I asked the portress if M. Rodin and the Abbé d'Aigrigny seemed angry with each other when she saw them quit the house, but she told me 'No;' and that the abbé had only said to M. Rodin, as he left

the door of the house, 'To-morrow I will write to you, — that's understood.'"

"Is it a dream?" said Adrienne, applying her two hands to her forehead, with a sort of stupor. "I cannot doubt your words, my poor friend, and yet it was M. Rodin who sent you himself to that house to take assistance to your sister, and thus he would have exposed himself to your detecting his secret rendezvous with the Abbé d'Aigrigny! For a traitor, that would be very *mal-à-droit*."

"True; and I made the same reflection myself. Still the meeting of these two men appeared to me so menacing for you, mademoiselle, that I came here in the greatest possible terror."

Dispositions of extreme frankness are induced with great difficulty to give credit to treachery; the more infamous they are, the more they doubt them. Adrienne's mind was of this class, and, moreover, one of the qualities of that mind was rectitude; and thus, although La Mayeux's recital had made a great impression on her, she remarked:

"Still, my dear friend, do not let us alarm ourselves unnecessarily, — do not let us believe in evil too suddenly. Let us both try to set ourselves right by reasoning; let us recall the facts. M. Rodin opened Doctor Baleinier's house door to me, and in my presence made his accusatory charge against the Abbé d'Aigrigny; by his threats he compelled the superior of the convent to restore his daughters to Maréchal Simon; he has, too, discovered Prince Djalma's retreat, and faithfully executed my instructions as to my young relative. Yesterday, only, he gave me some most useful advice. Is not this true?"

"No doubt, mademoiselle."

"Now it may be, looking at things in their worst light, that M. Rodin has some concealed motive, and hopes to be generously rewarded by us, that may be;

but up to this moment his disinterestedness has been most complete."

"That is equally true, mademoiselle," said the poor Mayeux, compelled, like Adrienne, to give way before the evidence of what had been effected.

"Now let us consider the possibility of this treason. To coalesce again with the Abbé d'Aigrigny to betray me? — but betray me where? And when? And on what point? What have I to fear? Is it not, on the contrary, the Abbé d'Aigrigny and Madame de Saint-Dizier who have to render a fearful account to justice of the ill they have done me?"

"But then, mademoiselle, how can we explain the meeting of the two men who have so many motives to hate each other and keep separate? May not this conceal some sinister project? And then, mademoiselle, it is not I alone who think so."

"What do you mean?"

"This morning when I came here, I was so much agitated that Mlle. Florine asked me the cause of my trouble, and I know how much she is attached to you."

"It is impossible to be more devoted than she is to me, and you know you told me yourself of the service she rendered me during my confinement at Doctor Balcinier's."

"Well, mademoiselle, on my return this morning, thinking it necessary to inform you of all this as speedily as possible, I told Mlle. Florine all. Like me, and perhaps worse than myself, she was greatly alarmed at the meeting between Rodin and M. d'Aigrigny. After a moment's reflection, she said, 'I think it is useless to awaken mademoiselle; if she knows this treachery two or three hours hence, it will be all the same, and during that time I may, perhaps, be able to discover something. I have an idea, which I think a very good one, — excuse me with mademoiselle, and I will soon return.' Then Mlle. Florine sent for a coach, and went out."

"Florine is an excellent girl," said Mlle. de Cardoville, with a smile, for the reflection instantly reassured her; "but I think in this case her zeal and warm heart have misled her, as they have you, my good friend. Do you know that we are two giddy-pated damsels, you and I, for not having before thought of a thing which ought at once to have tranquillised us?"

"What is that, mademoiselle?"

"The Abbé d'Aigrigny is now, doubtless, in much dread of M. Rodin, and perhaps went to this retreat to ask his mercy. Do you think with me, that this explanation is not merely satisfactory, but the only one that is reasonable?"

"Perhaps, mademoiselle," said La Mayeux, after a moment's reflection; "yes, perhaps that is probable." Then, after a moment's silence, and as if she had yielded to a conviction superior to all possible reasoning, she exclaimed, "And yet, no, no; believe me, mademoiselle, they are deceiving you; I feel it all. Appearances are against what I declare, — but, believe me, these presentiments are too strong not to be true. And then, indeed, do you not divine fully the most secret instincts of my heart, whilst I do not, in my turn, divine the dangers which threaten you?"

"What do you mean? What have I divined?" asked Mlle. de Cardoville, involuntarily, struck and affected by the tone of La Mayeux, so full of conviction and alarm, as she continued:

"What have you divined? Alas! all the concealed susceptibilities of an unhappy creature to whom fate has made a life apart; and you must know very well that if I have been hitherto silent, it is not from ignorance of what I owe you; for who, indeed, informed you, mademoiselle, that the only means of making me accept your benefits without blushing would be to attach me to you, by giving me functions which would render me useful and serviceable to the unfortunate, whose lot

I shared so long? Who informed you, when you wished me henceforth to take my seat at your table as your friend, I, a poor work-girl, in whom you sought to elevate labour, resignation, and probity? Who informed you, when I replied to you by tears of gratitude and regret, that it was not a false modesty, but the consciousness of my deformity, which made me refuse you? Who informed you that, without that, I should have accepted with pride in the name of my sisters of the people? For you replied to me in these touching words, 'I understand your refusal, my friend. It is no false modesty that dictates it, but a sentiment of dignity which I love and respect.' Who still informed you," continued La Mayeux, with increasing animation, "that I should be so happy to find a sacred, solitary retreat in this magnificent mansion, whose splendour dazzles me? Who informed you of that which made you (as you have deigned) to choose, as you have done, an apartment by far too handsome, which you have destined for me? Who informed you that without envying the elegance of the charming women who are about you, and whom I already love, because they love you, I should always, by an involuntary comparison, feel embarrassed and ashamed before them? Who informed you that you should always think to send them away when you send for me here, mademoiselle? Yes, who has, in truth, revealed to you all those painful and secret susceptibilities of a position so distressing as mine? Who has revealed these to you? God, no doubt; he who in his infinite greatness created worlds, and who knows, in his paternal care and wisdom, how to protect and cherish the smallest insect concealed in the grass. And will you not allow the gratitude of a heart which you have divined so well to exalt itself in its turn into a divining of that which may injure you? No, no, mademoiselle, some have the instinct of self-preservation; others, more fortunate still have the instinct of the

preservation of others whom they love and cherish. This instinct God has graciously given to me. You are betrayed, I say, — you are betrayed!"

And La Mayeux, with animated look, and her cheeks slightly tinted with the emotion, spoke these last words so energetically, and accompanied them with a gesture so decisive, that Mlle. de Cardoville, already shaken by the energetic language of the young girl, now shared her apprehensions.

Moreover, although she had already fully appreciated the superior understanding, the remarkable good sense of this young child of the people, Mlle. de Cardoville had never heard La Mayeux express herself with so much eloquence, — an eloquence the more touching, as it had its source in the most noble sentiments. This circumstance added still more to the impression which Adrienne experienced. At the moment when she was about to reply to La Mayeux some one knocked at the door of the salon in which this scene was passing, and Florine entered.

When she saw the disturbed countenance of her chamberwoman Mlle. de Cardoville said to her, quickly:

"Well, Florine, what news do you bring? Where do you come from, my girl?"

"From the Hôtel de Saint-Dizier, mademoiselle."

"And why did you go there?" inquired Mlle. de Cardoville, with surprise.

"This morning, mademoiselle (and Florine pointed to La Mayeux) told me of her suspicions and uneasiness, which I shared. The Abbé d'Aigrigny's visit to M. Rodin appeared to me of most serious import, and I thought that if M. Rodin had been, during the last few hours, to the Hôtel Saint-Dizier, there could be no further doubt as to his treachery."

"Well," said Adrienne, more and more troubled, — "well?"

"Mademoiselle had desired me to attend to the removal

of the furniture from the pavilion, and several things still remained. In order to get access to the apartments it was requisite to apply to Madame Grivois, and thus I had an excuse for returning to the hôtel."

"Well, Florine; well — go on."

"I tried to sound Madame Grivois as to M. Rodin, but it was in vain."

"She mistrusted you, mademoiselle," said La Mayeux; "you might have expected that."

"I asked her," continued Florine, "if M. Rodin had been seen at the hôtel lately. She replied evasively. Then, despairing of learning anything, I quitted Madame Grivois, and, that my visit might not inspire any suspicion, I went to the pavilion, when, as I turned into one of the walks, what should I see a few paces from me, and going towards the small garden gate, but M. Rodin, who believed, no doubt, that he could go out more privately that way."

"Mademoiselle, do you hear?" exclaimed La Mayeux, clasping her hands in a supplicating manner. "Surely you will be convinced by evidence."

"He at the Princesse de Saint-Dizier's!" cried Mlle. de Cardoville, whose look, usually so mild, was now one of severest indignation, adding, in a voice that shook slightly, "Go on, Florine."

"At the sight of M. Rodin I stopped," resumed Florine, "and retreating quickly, I reached the pavilion without being seen, and entered the small passage which looks into the street. The windows look out close to the garden door. I opened one, and, leaving the outer blinds still shut, I saw a hackney-coach, which was awaiting M. Rodin, who, a few minutes afterwards, got into it, saying to the coachman, 'Rue Blanche, No. 39.'"

"The prince's abode!" cried Mlle. de Cardoville.

"Yes, mademoiselle."

"And M. Rodin was to have seen him to-day," said Adrienne, reflecting.

"No doubt, if he betrayed you, mademoiselle, but he would also betray the prince, who will become his victim much more easily than yourself."

"Infamous! infamous! infamous!" exclaimed Mlle. de Cardoville, rising, and her features contracted by painful anger. "Unequalled treachery! This is enough to make me doubt everybody, — even to doubt oneself."

"Oh, mademoiselle, it is frightful, is it not?" said La Mayeux, with a shudder.

"But, then, why rescue me and mine? Why denounce the Abbé d'Aigrigny?" inquired Mlle. de Cardoville. "Really one's senses are disturbed by it. It is an abyss. Oh, what a fearful thing is doubt!"

"As I returned," said Florine, casting a tender and devoted look at her mistress, "I bethought me of a means which would allow mademoiselle to learn what the facts really are, but we have not a moment to lose."

"What do you mean?" inquired Adrienne, looking at Florine in great surprise.

"M. Rodin will be alone with the prince," said Florine.

"Unquestionably," said Adrienne.

"The prince is still in the small apartment which opens into the conservatory, and there he will receive M. Rodin."

"Well, what then?" said Adrienne.

"This conservatory, which I have arranged, as mademoiselle desired, has its only exit by a small door leading to a narrow lane. By this the gardener enters every morning in order that he may not cross the rooms. When he has finished his work he does not return that day."

"What do you mean? What is your plan?" asked Adrienne, looking at Florine, more and more surprised.

"The clumps of trees are so disposed, that I think, when the blind which conceals the glass door separating the salon from the conservatory is not lowered, we could, I think, without being seen, approach near enough to overhear what is said in the other room. It was always by this door that I have entered lately to superintend

the arrangements. The gardener had a key, and I another. Fortunately I have mine yet, and before the lapse of another hour mademoiselle may learn what ought to be her real opinion of M. Rodin; for if he deceives the prince, he deceives her, also."

"What do you mean?" said Mlle. de Cardoville.

"Mademoiselle goes this instant with me; well, we reach the door in the lone alley; I enter alone, for precaution's sake, and if the occasion appears favourable, I return —"

"Espionage!" said Mlle. de Cardoville, with hauteur, and interrupting Florine. "Can you really think of such a thing?"

"Pardon, mademoiselle," said the young girl, lowering her eyes, with a confused and distressed air; "you have your suspicions, and this appears to me the sole means by which you can confirm or destroy them."

"Sink so low as go and listen to a conversation? Never!" replied Adrienne.

"Mademoiselle," said La Mayeux, suddenly, after having been pensive for a long time, "allow me to tell you that Mlle. Florine is right; the means are painful, but that alone can determine you, perhaps for ever, as to M. Rodin; and then, too, in spite of the evidence of facts, in spite of almost the certainty of my presentiments, the most guilty appearances may be deceitful. It was I who first accused M. Rodin to you, and I should not forgive myself all my life if I have wrongfully charged him. Unquestionably it is as you say, mademoiselle, most painful to spy, — to listen, — and to overhear a conversation —"

Then making a violent and painful effort over herself, La Mayeux added, whilst she endeavoured to restrain the tears of shame which veiled her eyes:

"Still as it, perhaps, may save you, mademoiselle; for if it be a treachery, the future is most fearful — I will go, if you please, in your place — to —"

"Not another word, I entreat," cried Mlle. de Cardoville, interrupting La Mayeux. "I couldn't allow you to do — you, my poor friend, and in my interest so deeply — what appears to me degrading! Never!"

Then addressing Florine:

"Go and tell M. de Bonneville to have the carriage got ready this moment."

"You consent, then, to go?" exclaimed Florine, clasping her hands, unable to repress her joy, and her eyes became moist with tears.

"Yes — I consent," replied Adrienne, in a voice of deep emotion; "it is a war — a war to the knife, that they seek to direct against me, and I must prepare for the struggle. It would, indeed, be weakness and self-deceit not to put myself on my guard. No doubt the step is most repugnant, and costs me deeply, but it is the only means of terminating suspicions, which would be a constant torment to me; and, perhaps, prevent greater mischiefs. Then, for very important reasons, this conversation with M. Rodin and Prince Djalma may be doubly decisive for me as to the confidence or the inexorable hatred I shall have for M. Rodin. So quick, Florine, a cloak, a bonnet, and my carriage; you shall accompany me. You, my friend, await me here, I request of you," she added, addressing La Mayeux.

Half an hour after this conversation, Adrienne's carriage stopped, as we have described, at the small garden gate in the Rue Blanche.

Florine entered the conservatory, and returned soon, saying to her mistress:

"The blind is down, mademoiselle, and M. Rodin has just entered the prince's apartment."

Mlle. de Cardoville was then present (though unseen) at the following scene which passed between Rodin and Djalma.

CHAPTER XII.

THE LETTER.

Some minutes before the arrival of Mlle. de Cardoville in the conservatory, Rodin had been introduced by Faringhea to the prince, who, still under the intense excitement in which the words of the métis had plunged him, had not perceived the entrance of the Jesuit.

Rodin, surprised at the emotion visible in Djalma's features, and his almost wild manner, made an interrogative sign to Faringhea, who replied, without observation from Djalma, and with signs thus: after having placed his forefinger on his heart and his forehead, he pointed with his finger to the burning brasier, which was alight in the fireplace.

This pantomime signified that the head and heart of Djalma were in flames.

Rodin, doubtless, understood, for an imperceptible smile of satisfaction played on his corpse-like lips, and he said, in a low voice to Faringhea:

"I wish to be alone with the prince; pull down the blind, and see that no one interrupts us."

The métis bowed, then, touching a spring placed near the plate glass door, it retreated into the thickness of the wall so that the blind could fall; then, again bowing, the métis left the apartment. It was a short time after his departure that Mlle. de Cardoville and Florine reached the conservatory, which was only separated from the apartment in which Djalma was by the transparent thick-

ness of the white silk blind, worked with large, coloured birds.

The noise of the door which Faringhea shut as he went out seemed to recall the young Indian to himself; his features, still slightly animated, had resumed their habitual expression of calm and sweetness. He started, passed his hands over his forehead, looked about him, as if he were recovering from a deep reverie, then, advancing towards Rodin with an air at once respectful and embarrassed, he said to him, employing an appellation habitually used in his country to old men:

"Pardon, my father."

And then, according to the custom so full of deference of young persons towards the old, he sought to take Rodin's hand and carry it to his lips, but the Jesuit refused this homage by retreating a few steps.

"And for what do you ask pardon, my dear prince?" said he to Djalma.

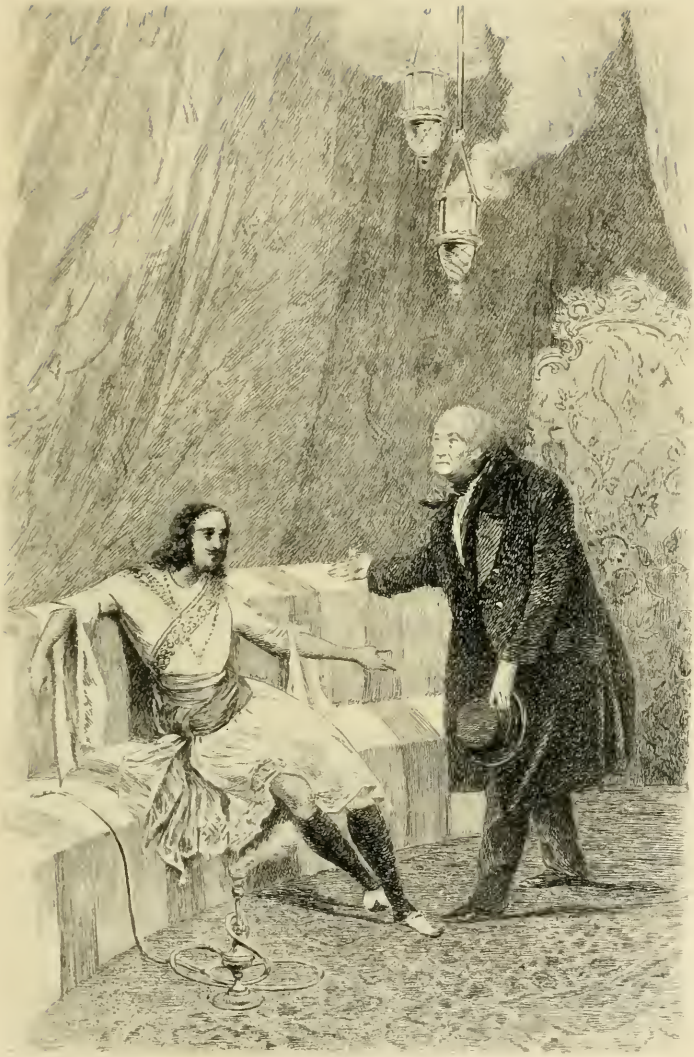
"I was dreaming when you came in, and did not instantly address you. Again, pardon, father."

"And again, I pardon you, my dear prince; but let us talk a little, if you will; resume your place on the sofa, and your pipe, if you will."

But Djalma, instead of complying with Rodin's invitation, and stretching himself on the divan, as was usual with him, seated himself in an armchair, in spite of the old man with the good heart, as he called the Jesuit.

"Really, your ceremony makes one quite uncomfortable, my dear prince," said Rodin to him. "You are here in your own house in the bosom of India, or at least we desire that you should think you are there."

"Many things here recall my country to me," said Djalma, in a low and gentle voice. "Your kindnesses remind me of my father, and of him who has replaced him," added the Indian, thinking of Maréchal Simon, of whose arrival he had been, for certain reasons, kept in ignorance up to that time.



After a moment's silence, he replied in a tone of pleasure, and extending his hand to Rodin:

"You are here, and I am happy."

"I comprehend your joy, my dear prince, for I come to release you from your imprisonment, — to open your cage. I had begged you to submit to this brief voluntary confinement, which was absolutely necessary for your interest."

"Then to-morrow I may go out?"

"This very day, my dear prince."

The young Indian reflected for an instant, and then said:

"I have friends, since I am here in this palace which does not belong to me?"

"Yes, you have friends, — excellent friends," replied Rodin.

At these words Djalma's countenance seemed to expand more fully, the noblest sentiments were suddenly imprinted on his varying and expressive physiognomy; his large black eyes became slightly moistened, and, after a short silence, he rose, saying to Rodin with a tremulous voice:

"Come!"

"Where, my dear prince?" inquired the other, greatly surprised.

"To thank my friends. I have waited three days; it is a long time."

"Permit me, my dear prince — permit me — I have a great deal to say to you on this point — be so good as resume your seat."

Djalma seated himself quietly in his armchair.

Rodin continued:

"It is true, you have friends, or rather you have a friend — friends are very rare."

"But you?"

"True, true — you have two friends, my dear prince; me whom you know, and another whom you do not know, and who desires to remain unknown to you."

"Wherefore?"

"Wherefore?" replied Rodin, after a short embarrassment. "Because the happiness which he experiences in giving you proofs of his friendship, because his tranquillity are the price of this mystery."

"Why should he who does good conceal himself?"

"Sometimes to conceal the good he does, my dear prince."

"I profit by this friendship; wherefore should he conceal himself from me?"

The repeated wherefores of the young Indian seemed rather to perplex Rodin, who, nevertheless, replied:

"I have told you, my dear prince, that your secret friend would, perhaps, have his tranquillity compromised if he were known."

"If he were known for my friend?"

"Precisely so, dear prince."

Djalma's features assumed an expression of melancholy dignity; he raised his head disdainfully, and said, in a stern and haughty voice:

"Since this friend conceals himself, it is he who blushes for me, or I who ought to blush for him. I do not accept hospitality but from persons of whom I am worthy, or who are worthy of me, — I leave this house."

And as he said this, Djalma rose so resolutely that Rodin exclaimed:

"But listen to me, then, my dear prince; you are, allow me to say it, remarkably hasty, impetuous. Although we have endeavoured to recall to you your beautiful country, we are here in the heart of Europe, the heart of France, the heart of Paris; this consideration ought somewhat to modify your mode of viewing things, and I entreat you to listen to me."

In spite of Djalma's complete ignorance of certain social conventions, he had too much good sense, too much right feeling, not to be amenable to reason, when it appeared to him to be reason, and Rodin's words

calmed him. With that ingenuous modesty usually inherent in natures full of strength and generosity, he replied, softly:

"Father, you are right, I am not in my own country; here habits are different. I will reflect on this."

Despite his cunning and plasticity, Rodin found himself some time defeated by the uncultivated turns of mind and the unforeseen ideas of the young Indian. He saw him now, to his great surprise, remain pensive for some minutes; after which Djalma continued, in a tone calm but full of conviction:

"I have obeyed you, my father; I have reflected."

"Well, my dear prince?"

"In no country in the world, under no pretext whatsoever, ought a man of honour, who has friendship for a man of honour, to conceal it."

"But if it is dangerous for him to avow this friendship?" said Rodin, extremely uneasy at the turn which the conversation was taking.

Djalma looked at the Jesuit with disdainful astonishment, and made no reply.

"I understand your silence, my dear prince, a brave man should face danger — true; but if it were you that the danger threatened, in case this friendship were discovered, would not this man of honour be excusable, even praiseworthy, if he desired to rest unknown?"

"I will accept nothing from a friend who believes me capable of denying him through cowardice."

"Dear prince, hear me."

"Adieu, father."

"Reflect."

"I have said!" added Djalma, in a brief and almost kingly tone, and advancing towards the door.

"Eh, but indeed, suppose it were a female who was the party concerned!" exclaimed Rodin, driven to his wits' end, and hastening towards him, for he was really alarmed to see Djalma thus determined

to quit the house, and so completely overturn all his projects.

At these last words of Rodin, the Indian stopped abruptly.

"A female?" said he, starting and turning crimson; "is there a female concerned?"

"Yes, yes, there is a female concerned," answered Rodin; "do you now understand her reserve and the secrecy with which she is obliged to envelope those proofs of affection which she is desirous of giving you?"

"A female?" repeated Djalma, in a tremulous voice, and clasping his hands with fervour; and his fine features expressed his deep internal feeling. "A female?" he repeated, "a Parisian?"

"Yes, my dear prince, since you compel me to this indiscretion, I must own the fact to you — it is — it concerns a venerable Parisian — a worthy matron — virtue itself — and whose advanced years call for all your respect."

"Is she very aged?" inquired poor Djalma, whose charming vision had melted suddenly

"Into air, into thin air."

"Some years my senior," replied Rodin, with an ironical smile, expecting to see the young man express a kind of comic spite or angry regret. He did neither.

To the amorous, impassioned enthusiasm, which had for an instant expanded over the features of the prince, succeeded a respectful and tender expression; he looked at Rodin with deep emotion, and said to him in soft accents:

"This female is then to me as a mother?"

It is impossible to depict the charm (so pious, melancholy, and tender) with which the Indian uttered to him the words, "a mother!"

"Just so, dear prince, this respectable lady seeks to be a mother to you; but I cannot reveal to you the cause

of the affection which she bears you. Only believe me this affection is sincere; the cause of it is honourable, and if I do not reveal this secret, it is because with us the secrets of all women, young or old, are sacred."

"That is just, and her secret shall be sacred for me; without seeing her I will love her with respect, as we love God without seeing him."

"Now, dear prince, let me tell you the intentions of your maternal friend. This house will always remain at your disposal, if you so please. The French servants, a carriage and horses, will be at your orders: all the expenses of your establishment will be paid. Then, as a son of a king ought to live royally, I have left in the next apartment a casket containing five hundred louis. Every month a like sum will be handed to you. If that is not sufficient for what we call your private expenses, you must tell me, and I will increase it."

Djalma made a movement, and Rodin hastened to add:

"I must tell you, also, my dear prince, that your delicacy may rest perfectly content. In the first place, one accepts of any and everything from a mother; then, as in three months hence you will be put in possession of an enormous inheritance, it will be easy for you, if this obligation weighs upon you (at the utmost the sum can scarcely reach four or five thousand louis), it will be easy for you to repay these advances; therefore do not economise or spare, satisfy all your fancies. It is wished that you should appear in the leading ranks of Parisian fashion as the son of a king, surnamed the "Father of the Generous," should do. Thus, once again, I entreat you, do not be restrained by any false delicacy; and, if this sum is not sufficient — "

"I will ask for more; my mother is right, — a king's son should live like a king."

Such was the Indian's reply in perfect simplicity, and without appearing the least astonished in the world at

these superb offers; and yet it was very natural. Djalma would have done what was done for him; for we know what are the traditions of the prodigal magnificence and splendid hospitality of Indian princes. Djalma had been as deeply excited as grateful when he learned that a female loved him with maternal affection. As to the luxury with which she desired to enrich him, he accepted it without astonishment and without scruple.

This resignation was another contretemps for Rodin who had prepared several excellent arguments to induce the prince to accept.

"Well, then, this is all clearly understood, my dear prince," said the Jesuit. "Now, as it is necessary that you should see the world, and enter it by the best gate, as we say, why, one of the friends of your maternal protectress, M. le Comte de Montbron, an old man full of experience, and belonging to the highest society, will present you in the principal circles of Paris —"

"Why do not you present me, father?"

"Alas, my dear prince, look at me, and tell me if I could do such a thing. No, no, I live alone and in retirement. And, besides," added Rodin, after a brief silence, and fixing on the young prince a penetrating, searching, and inquisitive look, as if he would have submitted him to a kind of experiment by the following words, "and then, you see, M. de Montbron would be even better than me, in the world with which he mixes, to enlighten you as to the snares that may be spread for you. For, if you have friends, you have also enemies, you know, — base enemies, who have abused your confidence in an infamous manner, and have ill-used you. And, as unfortunately their power is equal to their wickedness, it might be, perhaps, prudent to try and avoid them, — to fly them instead of resisting them face to face."

At the recollection of his enemies, at the thought of flying from them, Djalma shook from head to foot, his

features became suddenly of a livid paleness, his eyes, which were widely opened, and whose pupils were thus encircled with white, sparkled with dark fire. Never did disdain, hatred, and the thirst of vengeance light up a human countenance more terribly. His upper lip as red as blood showed his small, white, and close-set teeth, whilst it curled up convulsively, and gave his face, just now so charming, an expression of ferocity so brutal that Rodin rose from his chair and cried:

"What ails you, prince? You frighten me."

Djalma made no reply. Half leaning on his seat, his two hands clenched with rage and locked in each other, he seemed to fasten himself to one of the arms of his chair for fear of giving way to the excess of his fearful rage. At this moment it chanced that the amber top of his hooka pipe rolled under his feet, and such was the violent tension which contracted all the Indian's nerves, that, in spite of his youthful and slender appearance, such was his strength that with one motion of his foot he pulverised the amber to atoms, notwithstanding its excessive hardness.

"In the name of Heaven, prince, what ails you?" inquired Rodin.

"Thus will I crush my base enemies!" exclaimed Djalma, with a threatening and inflamed look.

Then, as if these words had consummated his rage, he bounded from his seat, and then, with haggard eyes, paced up and down and about the apartment for several seconds with rapid strides as if he were seeking some sort of weapon, uttering from time to time a sort of hoarse cry, which he tried to stifle by pressing his clenched fists against his mouth whilst his jaws quivered convulsively. It was the impotent rage of a wild beast thirsting for carnage.

The young Indian was thus of grand and savage beauty. It was evident that those divine instincts of sanguinary ardour and blind intrepidity, raised to such

a pitch by the horror of treachery and cowardice, when directed to war or those giant hunts of India more slaughtering than even a battle itself, would make of Djalma what he was — a hero!

Rodin gazed with deep and sinister delight at the maddened impetuosity of the young Indian, who, under certain circumstances, would assuredly give way to these terrible explosions.

Suddenly, to the great surprise of the Jesuit, this tempest calmed. Djalma's fury was suddenly appeased, because reflection told him how vain was this display. Then ashamed of his childish temper, he cast down his eyes. His features remained pale and sombre; and, then, with calmness, the more to be dreaded after the violent gust of passion to which he had given way, he said to Rodin:

"Father, to-day you must lead me to the face of my enemies."

"For what, my dear prince, what would you?"

"Kill these cowards."

"Kill them! You do not think of such a thing?"

"Faringhea will aid me."

"Once again, reflect that you are not here on the banks of the Ganges, where a man slays his enemy as he would a tiger in the chase."

"We fight with a noble foe; we kill a traitor like an accursed dog," replied Djalma, with as much conviction as calmness.

"Ah, prince, you whose father was called the Father of the Generous!" said Rodin, in a serious tone. "What joy shall you find in striking creatures as cowardly as they are wicked?"

"To destroy what is dangerous is a duty."

"But, then, prince, revenge!"

"I do not revenge myself on a serpent," said the prince, with bitter haughtiness, "I crush it!"

"But, my dear prince, here we do not get rid of

our enemies in this way; if we have to complain of them — "

"Women and children complain," said Djalma, interrupting Rodin, "men strike."

"Yes, on the banks of the Ganges, my dear prince, but not here. Here society takes your cause in hand, examines it, judges it, and, if need be, punishes it."

"In my own offences I am judge and executioner."

"I pray of you to listen to me. You have escaped the odious snares of your enemies, have you not? Well, suppose that has been effected by the devotedness of the venerable female who has for you the tenderness of a mother; now, if she asked you to pardon them, she who has saved you from them, what should you do?"

The Indian bowed his head, and remained for some moments without making any reply.

Profiting by this hesitation Rodin continued:

"I might say to you, prince, I know your enemies, but, in the fear of seeing you commit some terrible imprudence, I will conceal their names from you for ever. Well, now I swear to you that if the estimable person who loves you as a son finds it just and useful that I should tell you their names, I would tell you. But until she has so empowered me, I shall be silent"

Djalma looked at Rodin with a sombre and angry air.

At this moment Faringhea entered, and said to Rodin:

"A man has been to your house to take a letter to you; they told him that you were here, and he has come. Must I take the letter? He says it comes from M. l'Abbé d'Aigrigny."

"Certainly," said Rodin; then he added, "that is, with the prince's permission?"

Djalma made a sign with his head. Faringhea went out.

"You will excuse me, dear prince; I expected this morning a very important letter, and as it was de-

layed, being unwilling to fail in coming here, I left word at home that it should be forwarded to me here."

Some instants afterwards Faringhea returned with a letter, which he handed to Rodin, after which the métis left the apartment.

CHAPTER XIII.

ADRIENNE AND DJALMA.

As soon as Faringhea had quitted the apartment, Rodin took the letter from the Abbé d'Aigrigny in one hand, while with the other he appeared searching for something, first in the side pocket of his greatcoat, then in the hinder one, next in the pocket of his trousers; but not discovering what he sought, laid the letter upon the threadbare knee of his old black trousers, while both hands were busily occupied in feeling in all directions for what he required, while his manner indicated equal vexation and uneasiness.

All these cleverly enacted pantomimic gestures were crowned by the exclamation of "God bless me, how very unfortunate!"

"What is the matter?" inquired Djalma, roused from the reverie into which he had been for several minutes plunged.

"My dear prince," replied Rodin, "the most trifling and common occurrence has befallen me, and yet it is a matter of serious annoyance and inconvenience under present circumstances. The fact is, I have either lost or forgotten my spectacles, and what with the imperfect light here, and the wretched state to which labour and old age have reduced my sight, I cannot manage to read this letter, which is of the first importance, for I am expected to return an answer at once prompt, decisive, and categorical, — an affirmative or negative, — and, unfortunately, time presses. It is most unfortunate! If,

indeed," added Rodin, laying considerable emphasis on his words, without, however, looking at Djalma, but rather seeking to attract his attention, — "if, indeed, there were any person who could read it for me. But, no, no! That is out of the question — no one can aid me!"

"Father," said Djalma, kindly, "will you allow me to read it for you? Be assured that directly I have done so, I shall forget every word that it contains."

"You!" exclaimed Rodin, as though the proposition of the young Indian had been alike preposterous and dangerous. "Oh, dear no, — impossible, prince! You read this letter, you?"

"I beg of you to pardon me for having proposed to do so," said Djalma, mildly.

"And yet," resumed Rodin, after a brief consideration, and as though speaking to himself, "why should I not accept?" Then addressing Djalma, he added, "Would you really have the goodness to read it for me, my dear prince? I should not have ventured to ask such a thing, but since you have had the complaisance to propose rendering me this great service, I cannot bring myself to refuse it, in the great emergency in which I am placed."

So saying, Rodin gave the open letter to Djalma, who, in a clear and distinct voice, read as follows:

"Your visit of this morning to the Hôtel Saint-Dizier, according to the account I have received of it, can only be considered as a fresh aggression on your part. You will find herein the last proposition that will be made you. It may possibly fail equally with the arrangement I endeavoured to persuade you to enter into when I called upon you yesterday in the Rue Clovis.

"After the long and painful explanation which then took place, I promised to write to you, and, by way of keeping my promise, I now send you my ultimatum; and, first, beware how you proceed.

"Take care. If you persist in maintaining an unequal struggle, you will expose yourself even to the scorn and hatred of those you foolishly seek to protect. There are a thousand ways of injuring you for ever in their estimation by enlightening them on your schemes, and of convincing them you have been concerned in the conspiracy against them, which you now pretend to unveil, and that your motives, in feigning to be their friend, arise not from generosity but cupidity."

Although Djalma had the instinctive delicacy to perceive the impropriety of questioning Rodin respecting this letter, yet he involuntarily turned an inquiring look towards the Jesuit, as he pronounced these last words.

"Yes, my dear prince," said Rodin, pointing to his old and faded garments, "they accuse a poor old man like me of being actuated by mercenary and interested motives in the little good I am enabled to do."

"And who are your protégés?"

"Who are they?" repeated Rodin, with feigned hesitation, as if embarrassed how to reply; "who are they? Oh, I'll tell you! Poor, unfortunate, and destitute beings, now in poverty and distress, but entitled to considerable wealth, for which they are now contending in a lawsuit, but are threatened with utter annihilation by some all-powerful personages, who, however, are happily sufficiently well known to me to enable me to unmask their villainous designs, and to turn my knowledge to the advantage of my poor protégés; for poor and humble myself, it follows, as a matter of course, I should espouse the cause of those who, like me, are miserable and obscure. But let me beg of you to continue reading."

Djalma resumed:

"You have, therefore, everything to fear in acting hostilely towards us, and nothing to hope for in espousing the part of those you call your friends, but who may be more justly styled your dupes; for as your disinterestedness would, if real, be inexplicable, so is it beyond

a doubt that it is merely assumed, to conceal your own greedy and avaricious views. And even viewing it in this light, we are disposed to offer you an ample compensation, with the additional recommendation of our offers being tangible and of immediate fulfilment, while the hopes you may have built upon, from the gratitude of your friends, are altogether vague and uncertain. To come to the point, the following are the terms to which you are required to accede: You shall quit Paris before twelve o'clock to-night at the very latest, and bind yourself not to return for six months."

Unable to restrain a movement of surprise, Djalma again looked earnestly at Rodin.

"To be sure," said the latter, "the suit of my poor protégés would be decided before then; and, by sending me out of the way, they deprive them of my watchful superintendence and counsel. Does not this strike you, my dear prince?" said Rodin, with the most bitter indignation. "But have the kindness to continue, and pardon me for having interrupted you; but such unblushing assurance was too much for me."

Djalma read as follows:

"And that we may be assured of your absence from Paris during the six months specified, you will be required to go to the houses of persons known to us in Germany, who will show you every attention, but with whom you must necessarily abide until the prescribed term shall have expired."

"Yes;" observed Rodin, contemptuously, "they offer me a voluntary prison!"

"Upon your acceptance of these conditions you will receive a monthly allowance, from the date of your departure from Paris, of ten thousand francs, and twenty thousand more at the termination of the six months. This will be fully secured to you, and, at the expiration of the above named period, a situation, both honourable and independent, will be provided for you."

Djalma having paused from the excess of his involuntary indignation, Rodin exclaimed:

"Let me request of you to proceed. My dear prince, pray read the conclusion of this epistle; it will serve to give you some idea of what is passing in the very bosom of civilisation."

Djalma resumed:

"You are sufficiently aware of the state of things, and also of our position, to be quite assured that, in removing you to a distance, our only aim is to be freed from an opponent who is rather annoying than dangerous. Be not blinded by your former success. The consequences of your denunciation against me are entirely put an end to, because the charge preferred by you was palpably calumnious, and even the magistrate before whom you preferred it now deeply laments his undue partiality in listening to your fabricated tale. You are at liberty to make what use you please of this letter. We know full well what we have said, how we have written, and to whom such writing is addressed. You will receive this letter at three o'clock. If, by the expiration of an hour, we have not your full and unequivocal assent to all herein proposed, written and subscribed by your own hand at the bottom of this letter, war begins again between us, and from this very night."

The letter concluded, Djalma looked towards Rodin, who said:

"Give me leave to call Faringhea."

So saying he touched the bell, which had scarcely sounded ere the métis appeared.

Rodin receiving the letter from the hands of Djalma, first tore it in half, then rolling it up in a kind of ball, he handed it to the métis, saying:

"You will give this paper to the person who waits, and tell him that is my only reply to its base and insolent contents! You understand — its base and insolent contents!"

"I will faithfully deliver your words," replied the métis, and quitted the room.

"This may be a dangerous warfare for you, my father," said the Indian, with sympathising interest.

"I doubt not it will prove so, my dear prince; but I do not follow your example, — seek to kill my enemies, because they are base and cowardly; but I wage war with them, sheltered by the protecting ægis of the law. Follow my example." Then, perceiving the features of Djalma again overcast, Rodin added, "I am wrong. I will not again intrude my advice upon this subject. Promise me only to refer the question to the judgment of your excellent maternal protectress, whom I shall see to-morrow. And then, if she consents, I will tell you the name of your enemies, but not otherwise."

"And is this unknown friend — this second mother," cried Djalma, "a person to whose decision I may venture to leave so important a matter?"

"Is she?" exclaimed Rodin, clasping his hands, and assuming an appearance of rapidly increasing enthusiasm. "Is she? Nay, the universe contains not a more noble, generous, or exalted mind than that which actuates every thought of your admirable protectress; and sure I am, that were you really her son, whom she loved with all the passionate tenderness of maternal affection, and if it became a question whether you should choose between death and cowardice, she would say, 'Die, my son! I can at least die with you!'"

"Oh, noble lady!" exclaimed Djalma, with enthusiastic ardour; "such was my own mother!"

"But for your protectress," continued Rodin, still increasing in energetic warmth, and contriving to approach nearer and nearer to the silken blind which masked the greenhouse, towards which he cast a sidelong and uneasy glance, "how shall I attempt to give you any adequate idea of her excellence? Picture to yourself the living personification of honour, courage,

and goodness — of undeviating truth — such a mixture, indeed, of the rarest virtues as might be expected to be found in the noblest, bravest-hearted man, united with the graceful pride of one who not only has never sullied her lips by falsehood, but has never even deigned to conceal a thought, and who would infinitely prefer death to being compelled to employ the many petty artifices, deceptions, and concealments almost necessarily forced upon females by reason of their very position in social life."

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to express the admiration which glowed in the features of Djalma as he listened to this animated description; his eyes sparkled, his cheeks were flushed, and his heart beat high with enthusiastic delight.

"Noble youth!" cried Rodin, taking another step towards the blind. It gratifies me thus to see your ardent feelings depicted on your expressive countenance, while I thus speak of your unknown protectress. Ah, trust me, she well deserves that almost religious adoration with which we regard all great and surpassingly gifted persons."

"I feel assured of it!" exclaimed Djalma, with much excitement "I know by the throbbings of my heart, which bounds with deep and admiring gratitude! Still, also, am I lost in surprise; for my mother is no more, and yet another female of such rare virtues lives to adorn the earth!"

"She does; for the consolation of the afflicted — to be the pride and ornament of her sex — to teach the world to worship truth, persecute vice, she is permitted to exist. Never has falsehood or artifice tarnished the pure brightness of her upright mind, stainless and unsullied as the sword of a brave and gallant knight. Only a few days since this adorable woman made use of an expression I shall remember to the last hour of my life. 'Sir,' said she, 'directly I have cause to suspect any person whom I either love or esteem —'"

Rodin was prevented from completing his sentence, —the blind, so violently shaken from without that its spring broke, ran suddenly up, and, to the almost speechless astonishment of Djalma, revealed the form of Mlle. de Cardoville. The covering had fallen from the shoulders of Adrienne, and, during the violence of her exertions to reach the blind, her hat, the strings of which were not tied, had dropped to the ground.

Having so hastily and unexpectedly quitted her own house, Adrienne had merely thrown a cloak over the elegant and tasteful costume she frequently wore when at home, and so radiant with beauty did she appear among the blooming plants and green foliage by which she was surrounded, that Djalma believed himself under the influence of a dream.

With distended gaze, clasped hands, and bending forwards as though in act of prayer, he remained transfixed with admiration. Mlle. de Cardoville, evidently much agitated, her cheeks tinged with a brighter hue than ordinary, made no attempt to enter the salon, but remained motionless at the entrance to the greenhouse. All this had taken place in less time than is required to describe it, and scarcely had the blind sprung up than Rodin, with well-feigned surprise, exclaimed:

"You here, mademoiselle?"

"Yes," said Adrienne, in a tremulous voice; "I come to complete the sentence you had begun. I once told you, that when any doubt arose in my mind as to the good faith of a person, I always made it a practice to acquaint the suspected individual, without reserve, of what was passing in my mind; yet I have failed in this act of justice towards you. I was here as a spy upon your proceedings, when your reply to the letter of the Abbé d'Aigrigny afforded me another proof of your sincerity and devotion. I suspected your integrity at the very moment when you were asserting my truth and candour. For the first time in my life I have stooped to

artifice. This weakness well deserves its punishment, that punishment I now endure from the reproaches of my own conscience. It calls for reparation, that I now make — for apologies, I here render them." Then addressing Djalma, she added, "At present, prince, secrecy is no longer possible. Allow me to introduce myself as Mlle. de Cardoville, your relative, and to hope that you will accept from a sister the same hospitality you would have accepted from a mother."

But Djalma answered not. Plunged in ecstatic contemplation of a creature more dazzlingly lovely than even his wildest dreams had portrayed, he experienced a species of delirium which paralysing both thought and reflection, appeared to concentrate his whole being in the one sense of seeing; and in the same manner as the feverish patient seeks to quench his inextinguishable thirst by long and repeated draughts of the pure element, which but seems to add fresh fire, so did the ardent and riveted gaze of the young Indian appear to draw in, with devouring eagerness, the absorbing delight of feasting his eyes upon so rare and perfect a specimen of beauty.

And, indeed, two more exquisite models of the divine creation could never be seen. Adrienne and Djalma were the living types of perfected beauty, as regarded their respective sexes. There appeared a something both providential and predestined in the meeting of these two beings so fresh in buoyant youth and vigour, so full of warm and generous impulses, so heroically proud and daring; and who, strange to say, knew each other's moral value even before they had met; for, if the words of Rodin had kindled in the heart of Djalma an admiration, as sudden as it was deep and enthusiastic, for the noble qualities and rare endowments of that unknown benefactor, whom he now found to be no other than Mlle. de Cardoville herself, so had the latter, in her turn, been both moved, touched, and terrified during the conversation she had just overheard between Rodin

and Djalma, in the course of which the latter had, by degrees, exposed, not only the delicacy and nobleness of his sentiments and the excellency of his heart, but also the violent impetuosity of his character; neither had she been able to restrain a movement of surprise, almost amounting to admiration, at the sight of the uncommon beauty of the young prince, which was quickly followed by a feeling at once strange and painful, — a sort of electric shock, which appeared to pass throughout her whole frame as her eyes encountered the warm, thrilling gaze of the enraptured Indian.

Deeply moved and agitated by the powerful impression she had received, Adrienne sought to conceal the nature of her emotion by addressing Rodin, and soliciting his pardon for having suspected him; but the prolonged silence of the prince gave additional strength to the embarrassment Adrienne was striving to conceal. Raising her eyes a second time towards Djalma, as though to ask for his reply to her sisterly offers of service, she encountered the fixed and ardent gaze of the Indian riveted on her countenance with an almost wildness of expression, and such an intensity of admiration, as caused her to cast down her looks with mingled terror, sadness, and wounded pride, and doubly to congratulate herself on having foreseen the absolute necessity for keeping the prince from her presence. So great was the feeling of alarm and disquietude, occasioned by his undisguised ardour and impetuosity, that she hastened to put an end to it, as well as to her own unpleasant position, by saying to Rodin, in a low and trembling voice:

"I pray of you, sir, to speak to the prince, and repeat to him my offers of hospitality and sisterly service, for myself I cannot remain here longer."

So speaking, Adrienne moved for the purpose of rejoining Florine, but with a sudden bound the young Indian sprung forward as a tiger darts upon the prey

about to be snatched from him. Terrified at the wild and ardent expression which lit up the features of the young Indian, Adrienne drew back with sudden terror, uttering a loud cry as she did so.

At this sound Djalma recovered himself and recalled all that had occurred; as the full particulars rose to his mind's view his eyes filled with tears of shame and regret for his past violence, his countenance was marked with the deepest, yet most gentle and melancholy contrition, while, in despairing sorrow, he threw himself on his knees before Adrienne, and, raising his clasped hands towards her, cried, in a voice at once mournfully sweet, supplicating, and timid:

"Oh, stay! I beseech you, stay! Oh, do not leave me; 'tis so long since I have been awaiting you!"

To this prayer, uttered with all the timid persuasiveness of a child, but with a resignation which contrasted powerfully with the almost savage impetuosity which had so greatly alarmed Adrienne not long before, she replied, while making signs to Florine to expedite their departure:

"Prince, it is quite impossible for me to remain here longer."

"But you will return?" said Djalma, making a violent effort to restrain his almost overpowering emotion. "I shall again be permitted to behold you?"

"Never, never!" cried Mlle. de Cardoville, in a faint voice.

Then profiting by the consternation into which her reply had thrown the prince, Adrienne quickly disappeared behind a large clump of plants and quitted the greenhouse.

At the moment, when Florine, hastening after her mistress, was compelled to pass by Rodin, the latter said, in a low and hurried tone:

"We must finish with La Mayeux to-morrow."

Florine shuddered as though the hand of death were

on her; but without making any reply she also disappeared behind the shrubs.

Overcome with the intensity of his feelings, Djalma still remained kneeling as Adrienne had left him, his head drooping on his breast, while his faultless features, in lieu of rage or impatience, were marked only by an expression of the deepest sorrow and perplexity, while large tears trickled silently down his cheeks.

As Rodin approached him he rose, but trembling so violently that he could barely totter into the adjoining room, where, falling on the divan, he covered his face with his hands.

Drawing near to him with a tender and commiserating air, Rodin murmured forth:

"Alas, I dread this! I was anxious to conceal from you the name of your benefactress; nay, I even told you she was old. Can you guess why, my dear prince?"

Djalma made no reply, but, letting fall his hands, turned towards Rodin, his face still bathed in tears.

"Because I was aware of the surpassing loveliness of Mlle. de Cardoville, and also how quickly young persons of your age are fascinated by beauty; and," pursued Rodin, "I wished, my dear prince, to spare you the painful trial to your feelings, since your young and charming protectress is tenderly attached to a young and handsome individual of this city."

At these words Djalma pressed both hands on his heart, as though to still some severe pain, uttered a wild and frantic cry; then his head fell back, he sunk senseless on the divan.

Rodin eyed him for several moments with cool disregard; then preparing to go, he said, while brushing his old hat with the sleeve of his greasy, threadbare coat:

"Oh, that stings deep, does it?"

CHAPTER XIV.

CONFIDENCES AND COUNSELS.

It was night. Nine o'clock had just struck.

It was on the evening of the day when Mlle. de Cardoville had, for the first time, seen Djalma. Florine, pale, agitated, and trembling, had just entered with a light in her hand into a sleeping apartment, furnished with much simplicity, but yet very comfortable.

This room was one of those which La Mayeux occupied at Adrienne's house. It was on the ground floor, and had two entrances, one opening on the garden, and the other into the courtyard; and it was on this side that persons came who were desirous of seeing La Mayeux to obtain alms or assistance. A meeting-room and a receiving-room were the other apartments, which were completed by the bedroom, into which Florine had just entered, with a disturbed and almost frightened air, hardly touching the carpet with the points of her satin shoes, and holding her breath and listening to every sound.

Placing her light on the mantelpiece, the chambermaid, after a hasty glance around the chamber, went towards a mahogany bureau surrounded by a very pretty bookcase well filled. The key was in the drawers, all three of which Florine searched. They contained various petitions for aid, and some notes in La Mayeux's handwriting. What Florine was seeking for was not there. A case containing three smaller drawers separated the

flap of table from the bookcase, and these were also examined, but also to no purpose. Florine made a gesture of vexation, looked about her, listened again with anxiety, and then, observing a small cupboard, made there, also, fresh but unavailing search.

At the foot of the bed was a small door leading to a large dressing-room, into which Florine entered, and at first sought uselessly in a large closet, in which hung several black dresses newly made for La Mayeux by Mlle. de Cardoville's order. Seeing on the ground, at the extremity of this cupboard, and half hidden by a cloak, an old trunk, Florine hastily opened it, and found therein, very carefully folded up, the miserable worn-out garments in which La Mayeux was clad when she had entered this abode of wealth and splendour.

Florine started, — an involuntary emotion contracted her features, but, reflecting that she must not let her heart soften, but obey the implacable mandates of Rodin, she shut the trunk and the dressing-room door, and returned into the bedroom.

After having again examined the bureau an idea crossed her mind; not content with again searching the smaller drawers, she quite drew out one, hoping to find what she sought for between the back of the drawers and the bureau, but she saw nothing. The second attempt was more successful, and she found hidden a thick copy-book. She made a motion of surprise, for she expected to find something else, but she took the manuscript and, opening it, turned the leaves over with much rapidity. After having run her eye over several pages she appeared satisfied, and was about to put the copy-book in her pocket, but, after a moment's reflection, she replaced it where she had discovered it, put all again into its former state, took up her candlestick, and left the apartment without having been detected, having assured herself that La Mayeux would be with Mlle. de Cardoville for some hours.

CONFIDENCES AND COUNSELS.

The day after Florine's search, La Mayeux, alone in her sleeping-room, was seated in an armchair by the chimney-corner, where a good fire was blazing. A thick carpet covered the floor, through the curtains of the window was seen the bank of a large garden, — the deep silence was unbroken but by the regular noise of the pendulum of a timepiece and the crackling of the fire.

La Mayeux, with her two hands leaning on the arms of her chair, was enjoying a feeling of happiness which she had not given way to so completely since her residence in the hôtel. For her, so long accustomed to cruel privations, there was an inexpressible charm in the quiet of this retreat, in the smiling appearance of the garden, and, above all, in the consciousness of owing the enjoyment she experienced to the resignation and energy she had evinced in the midst of so many severe trials, now so happily ended.

An elderly woman, of mild and gentle appearance, who had been, by Adrienne's express orders, attached to the service of La Mayeux, entered, and said to her:

"Mademoiselle, there is a young man who wants to speak to you directly on a very urgent matter; he says his name is Agricola Baudoin."

At this name La Mayeux uttered a slight cry of surprise, blushed slightly, and, rising, ran to the door which led to the adjoining apartment, where she found Agricola.

"Good day, my dear Mayeux," said the smith, cordially embracing the young girl, whose cheek became burning and crimsoned with his fraternal kisses.

"Ah!" she then cried, suddenly looking at Agricola with alarm, "what is this black bandage over your forehead? Have you been wounded?"

"Oh, it is nothing — really nothing, do not think of it. I will tell you all about it presently; but, first of all, I have something very important to communicate to you!"

"Come, then, into the next room, where we shall be alone," said La Mayeux, leading Agricola.

In spite of the great uneasiness which displayed itself on Agricola's features, he could not repress a smile of pleasure as he entered the young girl's room and looked about him.

"Capital, my dear Mayeux; this is the way I always wished to see you placed, and I can recognise the kind hand of Mlle. de Cardoville in this. What a heart! What a soul! You do not know that she wrote to me the day before yesterday to thank me for what I had done for her, and sending me a plain gold pin, which she added I could accept, for it had no value except that of having been worn by her mother. If you know how much I was touched by the delicacy of the gift!"

"Nothing should astonish you from a heart like hers," replied La Mayeux. "But your wound — your wound?"

"Directly, my good little Mayeux; I have so many things to tell you! Let me begin with that which is most important; for it is in a very serious matter that I require your good advice. You know full well what confidence I have in your excellent heart and sound judgment; and then, after that, I shall ask a service from you — yet a great service," added the smith, in a serious and almost solemn tone, which astonished La Mayeux; and he then added, "But let me begin with what does not concern myself —"

"Oh, do be quick!"

"After my mother had gone with Gabriel to a small curacy which he has procured in the country, and my father took up his abode with Maréchal Simon and his daughters, I went, as you know, to reside at the factory of M. Hardy, in the general house. Well, this morning — but I should first say that M. Hardy, after his return from a long journey which he lately made, has again gone away on business for some days. Well, then, this morning at breakfast-time, I had been working a little

after the last stroke of the clock, and was leaving the buildings to go to our eating-room, when I saw a lady alight from a hackney-coach, who, entering the yard, came quickly towards me. I saw she was fair, although her veil was half-way down her face, and as gentle as she was pretty. She was dressed like a person of consequence. Struck with her paleness, her uneasy and alarmed look, I inquired what she sought. 'Sir,' she said, in a trembling voice, and seeming to make a great effort over herself, 'are you one of the workmen of this establishment?' 'Yes, madame.' 'Is M. Hardy in danger?' she cried. 'M. Hardy, madame, has not yet returned to the factory.' 'What!' she exclaimed, 'did not M. Hardy return here yesterday evening? Has he not been dangerously wounded by a machine whilst in his workrooms?' And as she pronounced these words the lips of this young lady trembled so, poor thing! and I saw large tears falling down her cheeks. 'Thank Heaven, madame, nothing is more untrue,' said I; 'for M. Hardy has not yet returned, but is expected to-morrow or next day.' 'Then, sir, you tell me true, M. Hardy really has not arrived, and is not injured?' added the pretty lady, wiping her eyes. 'I tell you the truth, madame; if M. Hardy was in danger I should not be so tranquil whilst I am speaking with you.' 'Oh, thanks, thanks!' exclaimed the young lady. Then she expressed her gratitude to me with an air so rejoicing, so happy, so touching, that I was quite moved at it. Then suddenly, and as if ashamed of the step she had taken, she dropped her veil and left me hastily, going out of the yard and entering the coach which had brought her. I said to myself, 'She is a lady who takes an interest in M. Hardy, and who has been alarmed by some false report.'"

"She loves him, doubtless," said La Mayeux, quite affected; "and, in her trouble, has perhaps committed an imprudence in coming to make these inquiries."

"No doubt you are right. I saw her get into the hackney-coach with interest, for emotion had quite gained upon me. Well, away goes the coach. But what should I see a few instants afterwards? Why, a hack cabriolet, which the young lady did not see, concealed, as it was, by the angle of the wall; and, at the moment when it drove off, I clearly distinguished a man sitting beside the coachman, who made him a sign to follow in the same road that the hackney-coach was taking."

"The poor young lady was followed," said La Mayeux, with uneasiness.

"No doubt. So I ran after the hackney-coach, which I overtook; and at one of the windows, when the blind was down, I said to the young lady, as I ran by the side of the coach door, 'Madame, be on your guard, you are followed by some one in a cabriolet.'"

"Good! — capital — Agricola! And what did she say?"

"I heard her exclaim, '*Grand Dieu!*' in a tone of deep alarm. The coach went on; and presently the cabriolet passed before me, and I saw by the side of the driver a tall, stout, red-faced man, who, having seen me run after the hackney-coach, had, perhaps, a suspicion of something, for he looked at me with a disturbed air."

"And when will M. Hardy arrive?" inquired La Mayeux.

"To-morrow or next day; and now, my little Mayeux, advise me. This young lady loves M. Hardy, that is evident. She is, no doubt, married, for she had a very embarrassed look as she talked with me, and uttered a cry of so much terror when she learned that she was followed. What ought I to do? I have a great mind to ask advice of old Simon; but he is so very rigid in his notions. And then, a love-affair at his time of life! Whilst you, my dear Mayeux, who are so delicate and sensible, you will comprehend the thing so well."

The young work-girl shook slightly, and smiled bitterly. Agricola, who did not perceive it, continued:

"Then I said to myself, there is no one but La Mayeux who can advise me in this matter, and so, if M. Hardy returns to-morrow, ought I or ought I not to tell him all that has passed?"

"Listen to me!" exclaimed La Mayeux, suddenly, interrupting Agricola, and appearing to collect her thoughts. "When I went to the convent of Ste. Marie, to ask the superior for work, she proposed to me to enter as daily needlewoman into a house where I was to watch — it is useless to conceal the word — to spy over —"

"Wretch of a woman!"

"And do you know," said La Mayeux, — "do you know that they proposed to me to enter this family to carry on this unworthy system? It was at a Madame de Fremont's, or Bremont's, — I do not quite remember which, — a very religious lady, whose daughter, a young married lady, whom I was to espy particularly, as, the superior said to me, she received the too assiduous attentions of a manufacturer."

"What do you say?" exclaimed Agricola, "if this manufacturer should be —"

"M. Hardy. I have too many reasons not to forget the name which the superior let fall. Since then so many events have transpired that I had forgotten the circumstance. It is, therefore, most probable that this young lady is she of whom she spoke to me at the convent."

"And what interest could the superior of the convent have in this espionage?" asked the smith.

"I do not know. But, you see, the interest which she has is still in full force; for the young lady has been watched, and, perhaps, at this hour has been denounced — dishonoured. Ah, it is dreadful to think of!"

Then seeing that Agricola shuddered violently, La Mayeux added, "But what ails you, then?"

"Why not?" said the smith, speaking to himself; "if all that, — why should it not all proceed from the same hand? The superior of a convent may have a good understanding with an abbé. But, then, for what purpose, to what end?"

"Explain yourself, Agricola," said La Mayeux. "And your wound — how did you receive that? Pray do satisfy me on that point."

"Why, it was of my wound I was now going to speak; for, really, the more I reflect, the more the adventure of this young lady appears to me connected with other circumstances."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, you must know that, for some days past, there have been some singular transactions in the vicinity of our manufactory. In the first place, as we are in Lent, an abbé from Paris — a tall, good-looking man, they say — has been preaching in the little village of Villiers, which is but a quarter of a league from our workshops. This abbé has taken occasion in his discourse to calumniate and assail M. Hardy."

"In what way?"

"M. Hardy had drawn up and had printed a set of rules and regulations relating to our work, and the profits which he allows us. This document is followed by several maxims as noble as they are plain and simple, with some precepts of fraternity, which all the world can comprehend, extracted from different philosophers and different religions. Because M. Hardy has selected, as the most pure, from amongst different religious precepts, this abbé has taken upon himself to decide that M. Hardy has no religion of his own; and taking this conclusion for his theme, he has not only attacked him from the pulpit, but pointed out our factory as a focus of perdition, corruption, and damnation, because, on Sunday, instead of going to hear sermons or to the public-house, our workmen, their wives and children, pass the day in

working in their little gardens, in reading, singing in chorus, or dancing with their families in our general house. This abbé has gone so far as to say that such a mass of atheists, for so he calls us, will draw down the wrath of Heaven on the country; that there is much talk of the cholera, which is advancing; and it will be possible that, owing to our impious vicinity, all the environs will be smitten with this avenging scourge."

"To say such things to ignorant hearers," exclaimed La Mayeux, "is to risk exciting them to terrible actions."

"That is what this abbé is driving at, unquestionably."

"What do you mean?"

"The inhabitants of the environs, excited besides, no doubt, by some other malcontents, show themselves hostile to the workmen of our factory; and they have displayed, if not their hatred, at least their envy. Well, seeing us live in common, well lodged, well fed, well clothed, active, gay, and industrious, their jealousy is still further excited by the abbé's preachings, and the malevolent suggestions of some badly disposed fellows, whom I have recognised as some of the worst workmen at M. Tripeaud's, our rival manufacturer. All these disturbances begin to produce their fruits, and we have had two or three open quarrels with the inhabitants of the environs. It was in one of these rows that I had a blow on the head from a stone."

"Are you sure it is nothing serious, Agricola, quite sure?" asked La Mayeux, anxiously.

"Nothing of consequence, I assure you; but the enemies of M. Hardy have not confined themselves to preaching only, they have employed something even still more dangerous."

"What can that be?"

"I and almost all my comrades used our muskets pretty well in July, but it does not suit us at present, for very good reason, to take up our arms again. This

is not everybody's opinion very likely, we blame no one, but we have our own opinions, and the elder Simon, who is as brave as his son, and as patriotic as any man breathing, approves and directs us. Well, for some days past, we have found all around the factory, in the garden, in the yards, placards, in which we read: 'You are cowards, selfish cowards. Because chance has given you a good master, you remain indifferent to the misery of your brethren, and the means of emancipating them! Your own good fortune enervates you.'"

"Oh, Agricola, what a fearful persistence in wickedness!"

"Is it not? and these things have begun to have some influence over several of our younger comrades, as, after all, when generous and noble feelings are addressed, there is always an echo. So already some seeds of division are developed in our workrooms, which to this time have been so fraternally united; we feel that some secret ferment exists, and a cold distrust with several has displaced our wonted cordiality. Now, if I tell you that I am almost certain that these placards, thrown over the walls of the factory, and which have excited amongst us some displays of discord, have been spread by the emissaries of this preaching abbé, don't you think that all this, combined with what occurred this morning with respect to the young lady, proves that M. Hardy has for some time past had a number of enemies?"

"The matter appears to me as alarming as it does to you, Agricola," said La Mayeux, "and to be of so serious a description that M. Hardy alone can properly decide it. As for the affair of the lady, I advise you, directly M. Hardy returns home, to ask to see him, and however delicate may be the communication, tell him all that happened."

"There I scarcely know how to act, for will it not seem as though I sought to meddle with his private affairs?"

"Had not this lady been followed I should have partaken your scruples; but you see she was watched, and very possibly has incurred great danger. Therefore, in my opinion, it is more a matter of duty than choice to apprise M. Hardy of the whole transaction. Even supposing, as is most probable, that the lady be married, would it not be better, for a thousand reasons, that M. Hardy should be informed of everything?"

"You are quite right, my dear Mayeux, and M. Hardy shall know all; but now that we have decided upon the affairs of others, let us have a little talk about mine. Yes, of my affairs! For I have to speak to you of a matter upon which my future happiness or misery may depend," said the smith, in a tone so serious that poor La Mayeux's heart dreaded she knew not what. "You well know," said Agricola, after a short silence, "that from my earliest infancy I have been in the habit of telling you every circumstance that occurred to me. I have never concealed the merest trifle from you, but have related to you my very thoughts."

"Oh, yes, Agricola," replied La Mayeux, extending her thin and delicate hand, which the young man cordially pressed in his large, sinewy grasp, "I know you have, and always will, I hope."

"Stay! I am not quite right about telling you positively everything, because I did not like to mention many little love-affairs; which, though to be sure one might tell one's sister whatever follies or scrapes one might commit or fall into, yet, somehow, I never could bring myself to mention to so good and right-minded a girl as yourself."

"Thank you, Agricola," answered La Mayeux, casting down her eyes, and struggling heroically with the dread of coming evil, which lay heavily at her heart. "I often perceived a description of reserve in many of our conversations, though I could not guess its cause, but now I feel grateful to you for having thought about my feelings."

"But at the same time that I forbore to repeat to you

all the little love passages I occasionally amused myself with, I always determined, whenever anything of that kind seemed likely to end seriously, in marriage for instance, to let you be the very first person I should confide it to; just, you know, as a brother might entrust his sister with what he meant afterwards to submit to his father and mother. 'Then,' said I to myself, 'my dear good Mayeux shall be my first confidant.'"

"How very good of you, Agricola!"

"Well, then, something serious has happened; I am over head and ears in love, and I want to be married!"

At these fatal words the poor girl who was listening felt as though paralysed with horror; her blood seemed to curdle in her veins, an icy coldness seized her, her very sight grew dim, and for a few seconds she felt as though the hand of death was on her,—her heart ceased almost to beat, and seemed not to break, but, as it were, to dissolve, to become annihilated; but the first overwhelming agony over, like the early martyrs, who found in the very excess of their sufferings a motive for enabling them to smile even amid their excruciating tortures, the unhappy girl found, in her very dread of revealing the secret of her absurd and fatal passion, a power and resolution which enabled her, after a short pause, to look up with forced calm, almost amounting to serenity, and to say, in a steady voice:

"Indeed! You are really and seriously in love?"

"Oh, my dear La Mayeux, for the last four days I have thought of nothing else but my passion and of her who is the object of it."

"Then you have only been in love four days?"

"No longer, certainly; but that makes no difference, you know; the time has nothing to do with it; a great deal may happen in four days."

"And, of course, she is very beautiful?"

"Oh, lovely! Just imagine a shape like a fairy of the woods, such as you and I used to read about, you

remember, my dear La Mayeux; then such a skin, a lily would look dark beside her, — with large blue eyes — large as that," said Agricola, opening his own as wide as he could; "as sweet, as gentle, and as kind in their expression as — as — yours — "

"You flatter me, Agricola."

"Nonsense! You know I never should think of flattering you, — no, no! I only flatter pretty girls, like Angèle, — for that is the name of her I love, — is it not a pretty name, tell me, my dear La Mayeux, has it not a charming sound?"

"It is indeed," said the poor girl, comparing, with mournful bitterness, the contrast between this pleasing appellation and her own sobriquet of La Mayeux, pronounced even by the generous-hearted Agricola without a thought, but still courageously repressing any manifestations of regret, she repeated with desperate calmness, "Yes, indeed, any one might be pleased to have so pretty a name as Angèle."

"Well, then, if you like the name, what would you say to my Angèle, being both in heart, mind, and person precisely what that name would imply. As for her heart, I really think that, for goodness, it almost equals yours."

"Then," said La Mayeux, forcing a smile, "it seems that her eyes and her heart are like mine; it is strange, being strangers, that we should resemble each other so closely."

Agricola perceived not the bitter irony which concealed the full meaning of La Mayeux's words. He, therefore, replied with a tenderness of manner as sincere as trying to his auditor:

"Why, do you suppose, my dear La Mayeux, I could ever have felt a serious affection for any one who, in their disposition, mind, or heart, did not greatly remind me of you?"

"Come, come, brother," said La Mayeux, smiling (yes, the wretched girl, while writhing in her agony, had the

courage to force a smile), "you are disposed to be gallant to-day; but tell me, where did you become acquainted with this very charming person?"

"She is the sister of a fellow workman. Her mother is the head needlewoman who makes all the workmen's linen. During the last year she found that she required assistance, and, as it is one of the rules of our association always to give the preference to the relations of members, Madame Bertin (this is the name of my companion's mother) sent for her daughter from Lille, where she was living with one of her aunts; and, for the last five days, she has been in our linen establishment. The first time I ever saw her, I stayed for more than three hours in the evening, talking with herself, her mother, and brother. Oh, my heart was gone before the first hour had expired. The next day, and the day after, my love kept increasing, till I am fairly over head and ears, and fully bent upon marriage. If you do not disapprove — for — don't start, my dear girl — everything depends upon you — neither do I intend saying a word to my father or mother until I have had your opinion."

"Agricola, you really puzzle me; will you tell me what you mean?"

"You know how implicitly I believe in that singular instinct you possess. How often have you said to me, Agricola, mistrust such a one — love and esteem this person — place full confidence in another. Well, never in any one instance have I found you wrong. Now I want you to do me the same service again. You must ask permission of Mlle. de Cardoville to pass the day with me. I will take you to the manufactory. I have already mentioned you to Madame Bertin and her daughter as a tenderly beloved sister; and according to the impression Angèle makes upon you will depend whether I declare my love for her or no. Perhaps you may consider this as a superstitious weakness on my part, but I cannot help it."

"So let it be," replied La Mayeux, with heroical courage; "I will see your Angèle, and then give you my sincere and unbiassed opinion."

"Of that I feel quite sure; but when will you come?"

"I must inquire of Mlle. de Cardoville what day she can spare me; and then I will let you know."

"Thanks, my kind La Mayeux," said Agricola, with animated fervour; then he added, smilingly, "Only remember to bring your very best judgment with you, that which you reserve for great occasions."

"No joking, brother," said La Mayeux, in a voice of mournful earnestness; "the present affair is of deep importance, and your future happiness or misery may result from it."

At this moment some one knocked gently at the door.

"Come in," said La Mayeux.

Florine appeared.

"Mlle. de Cardoville begs you will go to her if you are not engaged," said Florine to La Mayeux.

The latter rose, and, addressing the smith, said:

"If you can wait a few minutes, Agricola, I will inquire of Mlle. de Cardoville what day I can dispose of, and I will return and tell you." So saying, the young girl quitted the room, leaving Agricola and Florine together.

"I should have been glad to have offered my humble thanks to Mlle. de Cardoville to-day," said Agricola, "but that I feared to be intrusive."

"My young lady is somewhat indisposed to-day," said Florine, "and sees no one; but I am sure that she will receive you with pleasure directly she is better."

La Mayeux here returned to the apartment, saying to Agricola:

"If you will call for me to-morrow, about three o'clock, — and then I shall not lose my whole day, — I will accompany you to the manufactory; and in the evening you can see me safe home again."

"That will do nicely. Then fare you well — till three o'clock to-morrow, my dear La Mayeux."

"Good-bye, Agricola; at three o'clock I shall expect you."

The evening of the same day, when all was still in the hotel, La Mayeux, who had remained with Mlle. de Cardoville till ten o'clock, entered her bedchamber, the door of which she locked; then, finding herself at last alone, and free from all constraint, she threw herself on her knees before an armchair, and burst into tears. Long, long did the sorely tried girl continue to weep. When, at length, her eyes refused to shed more tears, she arose, dried her eyes, and, approaching her desk, took from it the paper book; then removed from its hiding-place the manuscript so hastily perused by Florine the preceding night, and continued for several hours to write attentively in its pages.

CHAPTER XV.

LA MAYEUX'S JOURNAL.

We have already said that La Mayeux had written for a considerable portion of the night, in the book discovered and scrutinised on the previous evening by Florine, who had not dared to abstract it before she had acquainted with its contents the persons under whose directions she was acting, and having received their final instructions.

Let us explain the existence of this manuscript before we open it to the reader.

From the day on which La Mayeux had felt her love for Agricola, the first word of this manuscript had been written.

Endued with a disposition essentially loving, and yet feeling herself always restrained by fear of ridicule, a fear whose painful excess was La Mayeux's only weakness, to whom could this unfortunate girl have confided the secret of her fatal passion, but to paper, — to that mute confidant of brooding or wounded hearts, that patient, silent, calm friend, which, if it do not respond to the woes of the unhappy, at least always listens to, always remembers, them?

When her heart was full of various emotions, sometimes sad and sweet, sometimes bitter and distressing, the poor sempstress, finding a melancholy charm in these mute and solitary declarations, sometimes in a poetic form, simple and touching, sometimes written in simple prose, had, by degrees, become accustomed not

to place any bounds to the confidence which related to Agricola, although there was at the bottom of all her thoughts certain reflections which were produced in her by the sight of beauty, happy love, maternity, riches, and misfortune, and which were too strongly imbued with her sense of her own personal appearance, so unfortunately unprepossessing to allow of her ever communicating them to Agricola.

Such, then, was the journal of this daughter of the people, mean-looking, deformed, and wretched, but endued with an angelic soul and a bright intelligence, developed by reading, meditation, and solitude, — pages unknown, but which yet contained views clear-sighted and profound as to people and things, taken from that peculiar position in which fate had placed this unfortunate girl.

The following lines, interrupted in places, or blurred by tears, according to the course of emotions which La Mayeux had felt on the previous evening on learning the deep love of Agricola for Angèle, formed the last pages of this journal:

"FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 1832.

"My night had not been disturbed by any painful dream, and I rose this morning without any sad presentiment.

"I was calm, tranquil, when Agricola came.

"He did not appear to me agitated, but was, as he always is, simple and affectionate. He first told me of an event relative to M. Hardy, and then, without change or hesitation, said to me:

"'For the last four days I have been desperately in love; so deep has been the impression that I think of marrying, and I have come to ask your advice about it.'

"It was in these terms that this disclosure, so overwhelming to me, was made, naturally and cordially, as we sat by the fire, I on one side, and Agricola on the

other, as if we were only discoursing of the most commonplace affairs. Yet what more was necessary to break a heart? A person enters your room, embraces you as a brother, sits down, talks with you, and then — oh, Heaven, I shall lose my senses!

"I am calmer again. Courage, courage, poor heart! If some day misfortune shall again crush me, I will again peruse these lines, written under the impression of the most intense grief I ever experienced, and I will say to myself, 'What is this present sorrow to the agony that is past?'

"How cruel is this agony of mine! It is forbidden, ridiculous, shameful. I dare not confess it even to the tenderest, the most indulgent mother.

"Alas, these are fearful miseries, which yet give a right to people to shrug their shoulders with pity or disdain! Alas, these are, indeed, forbidden griefs!

"Agricola has asked me to go to-morrow to see the young girl of whom he is so passionately enamoured, and whom he will wed, if the instinct of my heart advises him to this marriage. This thought is the most agonising of all those which have afflicted me, since he so pitilessly told me of his love.

"Pitilessly! No, Agricola — no, no, my brother, forgive this unjust cry of a suffering heart. Thou dost not know, thou couldst not suppose, that I love thee more earnestly than thou lovest, or ever canst love, this charming creature.

"The shape and figure of a nymph, fair as a lily, with blue eyes as long as that, and almost as soft as yours.

"It was thus he drew her portrait.

"Poor Agricola, how he would have suffered, if he had but known how each word cut me to the soul!

"Never did I feel more poignantly than at this moment the deep commiseration, the tender pity, which a good and affectionate being may inspire you with, whilst,

in his sincere ignorance, he wounds you to death, and smiles at you.

"Thus I blame him not; far from it, I but pity him for all the pain he would experience, should he detect the grief he occasions me.

"How strange! Agricola never appeared to me handsomer than he looked to-day. How his manly face was excited when he mentioned the uneasiness of this young and handsome lady! When I heard him talk of the anguish of a woman who risks her own reputation for the man she loves, I felt my heart palpitate violently, my hands burnt like fire, a soft languor spread over my senses — Absurdity — derision! What right have I — I — to be affected thus?

"I remember that, whilst he was speaking to me, I threw one look at the mirror. I was proud of being so nicely dressed, although he did not notice it; no matter, I thought my cap became me, that my hair looked nicely, and my look was soft. I thought Agricola looked so well that I fancied myself less ugly than usual. No doubt I sought thus to excuse myself in my own eyes for daring to love him.

"After all, what happened to-day must have occurred some day or other.

"Yes (and the thought is consolatory for those who love life), death itself is nothing, inasmuch as it must come, some day or other.

"What has always preserved me from suicide — that last idea of the wretch who prefers going to God to remaining amongst his fellow creatures — has been a sentiment of duty. One should not think only of oneself.

"I said to myself also, 'God is good, always good, since the most forlorn of human beings find some one to love, some one to whom they devote themselves. How has it been that I, so weak and insignificant, have

always been able to be of service and utility to some one?'

"Yet to-day I was sorely tempted to end my life. Neither Agricola nor his mother have any further need of me. Yes, but then those unfortunates of whom Mlle. de Cardoville has made me the helper. My benefactress herself, although she scolded me kindly for the obstinacy of my suspicions of that man, I am more than ever afraid for her, I more than ever feel that she is threatened, more than ever have I faith in the utility of my presence near her.

"I must live, therefore, — live to go to-morrow and see this young girl whom Agricola loves so — so fondly!

"Merciful Heaven! Why has it ever been my lot to experience grief, but never hatred? Methinks there must be a great and bitter delight in being able to hate; it is a passion so easily roused, and so common with many; perhaps I may yet feel it, as regards the object of Agricola's affection, Angèle, as he called her, when he said, 'Is not Angèle a sweet, pretty name, La Mayeux?'

"The idea of mixing up names so dissimilar, — the one expressive of all that is graceful and lovely, the other conveying but the derisive remembrance of my own wretched deformity!

"Poor, dear Agricola, — my beloved brother! Who would believe that affection can sometimes inflict unconscious wounds, as deep and painful as the most premeditated cruelty?

"And wherefore should I wish to hate the fair young creature who has won Agricola's heart? Did she steal from me the beauty which has ensnared him? Alas, no! Then what cause of offence have I against her? Why cherish unkindly feelings because the hand of God has made her beautiful, and me —

"Before I had fully learned all the sad consequences of an appearance as repulsive as mine, I often asked

myself, with bitter curiosity, how it came to pass that an all-wise Creator should have endowed his creatures so differently?

"A long acquaintance with sorrow has taught me to reflect calmly on many painful subjects, and the result of my meditations is, that I am perfectly persuaded that to both beauty and ugliness are attached two of the finest emotions of the soul, — admiration and compassion.

"Such as myself deeply admire those who are beautiful, like Angèle and Agricola; while such as they look with pity and compassion on poor, afflicted creatures resembling me.

"How frequently it happens that, spite of our better judgment, we entertain vain and senseless hopes! Because Agricola, from motives of propriety, forbore to tell me of his love-affairs, as he now says, I had almost persuaded myself that he had never engaged in any, that his heart had never been touched, or that it was me he loved, and that the fear of ridicule prevented him, equally with myself, from confessing it. Nay, I even carried my folly so far as to write verses on the occasion; and, perhaps, inspired by the happiness the bare idea afforded me, they are the least faulty of anything I have committed to paper.

"How strange is my position! If I love I am an object of ridicule, while the person who should requite my passion would be still more derided.

"How could I have lost sight of that certainty when I allowed myself to endure the agony which wrung my heart, and still tears it, at learning Agricola's intention. Yet I bless God that, amidst all my sufferings, envy, hatred, or malice entered not into my heart. Oh, no, nothing so base shall influence my opinion of the chosen of Agricola, to whom I will act as becomes a faithful and devoted sister, even to the very last. I will only listen to the impartial whisperings of my heart; and if I have that instinctive perception of character Agricola

ascribes to me, it shall be employed to guide and enlighten him.

"My greatest dread is of bursting into tears at the sight of my innocent rival, of being unable to repress the violent struggle I am enduring.

"But, gracious Heaven, what would Agricola think? Would he not read my thoughts, and obtain a full revelation of my blind, my insensate passion?

"Oh, never, never! The hour that discloses to him the fatal secret of my love shall be the last of my life; there would then exist a motive stronger then duty itself why I should cease to exist, — the necessity of escaping from a hopeless, reproachful shame, which would for ever scorch and burn my brain.

"But no, this fearful evil shall not come to pass, — I will be calm. Have I not already undergone tortures in his presence, and was I not calm? Besides, no personal feelings must be allowed to overcloud the second sight, so penetrating and acute, where those I love are concerned.

"Oh, painful, painful task! For may it not happen that the very dread of being influenced by a wrong feeling in judging of Angèle may make me too indulgent in my estimate of her? And should I not, in that case, perhaps, involve the future happiness of Agricola, who leaves the sole decision in my hands?

"What a poor, weak creature I am! How easily I deceive myself! Agricola only asks my opinion because he wishes to flatter my self-pride; and also because he feels sure I could not have the painful resolution to oppose his passion. Or else, should my advice be contrary to what he desires, he will only say, 'No matter, I love Angèle, and I will take my chance of the future.'

"Still, if my advice and the instinct of my heart are powerless to guide him, wherefore should he have come hither to engage me to enter upon a mission so cruel as that of to-morrow?

"Wherefore? To afford me an opportunity of obeying his slightest wish. He has said, 'Come!' and shall I not fly to do his bidding?

"While alluding to my devotion to his request, I can but think how often have I asked the most secret recesses of my heart whether it could be possible that he might ever have thought of loving me otherwise than as a sister, if he had for a moment reflected upon the devotedness of my affection were I his wife.

"Yet what need of such a question? Have I not ever been — and shall I not still continue — as devoted to him as though it had pleased God to have made me his wife, his sister, or mother? Why should it ever have occurred to him to think of such a thing? We have no occasion to wish for that we already possess.

"Married to Agricola? I his wife? Merciful God, what a delusive, yet enchanting dream! What sweet, what blissful ideas of joy, too great for expression, does it not contain! But are not these delicious images of earthly happiness as ill-suited and unfitted for me to entertain, as though I sought to clothe this poor, misshapen body in all the seductive adornments only the lovely and the favoured may wear?

"I would fain know whether, when struggling beneath the accumulation of every distress, I should have suffered more than I now endure in learning the projected marriage of Agricola; would cold, hunger, and misery have rendered me less susceptible of the agony I now feel? Or would the intensity of my anguish have made me unmindful of the pangs of hunger, cold, and wretchedness?

"But this bitter and ironical strain is both sinful and unbecoming in me. And wherefore should I grieve so deeply? In what respect have the esteem, affection, or brotherly consideration of Agricola altered as far as I am concerned? I complain; but how much greater would be my sufferings if, as is often the case, I had been beautiful, loving, and devoted, and he had still

preferred to me one my inferior in each of those respects? Should I not, then, be a thousand times more deserving of pity? For I both could and ought to blame him; whilst at present it is impossible for me to feel displeased at his never having thought of a union as ridiculous as impossible.

"And even had he wished it, could I, for a moment, have been selfish enough to encourage such an idea?

"Many pages in this journal have been begun like this, — that is to say, under the influence of a grief too great for words to describe, — and yet almost always as I committed to paper words, I would have died ere I could have uttered them, my feelings became calm, and sweet and holy resignation came to my aid, smiling with gentle patience, and pointing upwards as my future reward. And so I resign myself, hopeless, yet loving, even till my heart is cold and motionless."

The journal ended here, yet it was abundantly evident, by the frequent traces of tears on the paper, how bitter had been the sufferings of the writer. In truth, worn out by so many emotions, towards morning La Mayeux had replaced the journal behind the pasteboard covering from which she had taken it, not imagining it to be in greater security there than elsewhere, — for who could she possibly believe in such a house capable of the smallest abuse of confidence? — but that it might be less exposed to view than if kept in one of the drawers she was in the constant habit of opening before any person.

In pursuance of her resolution, worthily to perform her duty to the end, the courageous and noble-hearted girl had awaited the coming of Agricola, and, in company with the young smith, had departed for the manufactory of M. Hardy.

Florine, — aware of the absence of La Mayeux, but detained for a considerable portion of the day by her duties to Mlle. de Cardoville, and preferring, likewise,

to wait till night ere she executed the fresh orders she had requested and received since her letter giving an account of the finding of La Mayeux's journal, with the nature of its contents, — certain of not being disturbed, waited till night had set in, and then, taking a candle in her hand, proceeded to the apartment of the young sempstress.

Acquainted with the exact spot where the manuscript was deposited, she went at once to the desk, took out the pasteboard box, then drawing from her pocket a sealed letter, she prepared to substitute it for the manuscript she had taken away.

At that moment she trembled so violently as to be obliged to hold by the table for support. As has already been said, all good feeling was not extinct in the mind of Florine. She obeyed the orders given her, but she deeply felt all the ignominy and treachery of her conduct. Had it been only herself who was concerned, there is little doubt but she would have had the courage to brave everything rather than exist under so disgraceful a subjection. But, unhappily, it was not so; and her disgrace would have carried a mortal blow to one she loved far better than her own life. She, therefore, resigned herself, though not without severe struggles, to play the base and infamous part allotted her.

Although nearly always ignorant of the purpose for which she acted, and still more so as to the reason of her being employed to abstract La Mayeux's journal, she vaguely foresaw that the removal of the manuscript and the substitution of the letter were fraught with the most direful consequences to the poor girl; for she had not forgotten those ill-omened words uttered by Rodin the day preceding, "We must get rid of La Mayeux to-morrow!"

What could he have meant by those words? And in what way could the letter he had commanded her to place in the room of the manuscript effect that purpose?

She knew not; but of one thing she was aware, that the devotion and clear-sightedness of La Mayeux caused a well-founded uneasiness and mistrust to the enemies of Mlle. de Cardoville; and even she herself, Florine, ran the risk of being one day or other discovered in her treacheries by the acute and penetrating vigilance of the young needlewoman.

This last apprehension put an end to the scruples of Florine, who, putting the letter where the journal had been, replaced the pasteboard case, and then, concealing the manuscript under her apron, stole cautiously from the chamber of poor La Mayeux.

CHAPTER XVI.

LA MAYEUX'S JOURNAL.

Florine, who had returned into her chamber some hours after she had hidden there the manuscript she had abstracted from La Mayeux's apartment, giving way to her curiosity, was resolved to look through it.

She soon felt an increasing interest, an involuntary emotion, in reading those intimate thoughts and reflections of the young work-girl.

Amongst several pieces of poetry, all of which breathed a passionate love for Agricola, — a love so deep, so unalloyed, and so sincere that Florine was touched by them, and forgot the deformity which exposed the poor Mayeux to so much ridicule, — amongst several pieces of poetry were various fragments, thoughts, or narratives relating to various subjects. We will quote a few, in order to justify the profound impression which their reading excited in Florine's mind.

FRAGMENTS OF LA MAYEUX'S JOURNAL.

"To-day was my birthday. Up to this evening I had clung to a foolish hope.

"Yesterday I had gone down into Madame Baudoin's room to dress a small wound she had in her leg. When I went in Agricola was there; I am certain he was talking to his mother of me, for they were silent directly, and exchanged a very significant smile. I then observed, as I passed the chest of drawers, a very pretty cardboard box, with a pincushion on the lid. I felt myself blush at

the happiness I felt, for I thought this little present was intended for me, but I pretended not to see anything. Whilst I was on my knees by his mother, Agricola went out, and I observed he took the pretty box with him. Madame Baudoin was never more kind and motherly to me than she was that evening. I thought she went to bed earlier than usual this evening. It was that I might leave her earlier, I thought, so that I might the sooner enjoy the surprise that Agricola had in store for me.

"Oh, how my heart beat as I went up-stairs as quickly as I could to my room! I even remained for a moment without opening the door, in order that my happiness might last the longer.

"At length I went in, my two eyes bathed in tears of joy. I looked on my table — on my chair — on my bed — there was nothing — the little box was not there. My heart was chilled, and I said to myself, 'It will be to-morrow, for to-day is only the eve of my birthday.'

"The day passed — the evening has come — nothing! The pretty box was not for me. There was a pincushion on the lid, — it could only be for a female. To whom could Agricola have given it?

"How I am pained at this moment!

"The idea I indulged in that Agricola would thus congratulate me on my birthday was silly; I am ashamed to confess it, even to myself. But that would have proved to me that he had not forgotten that I have another name besides that of La Mayeux, by which I am always called. My susceptibility on this point is so distressing, so intense, that it is impossible for me not to experience a moment of shame and chagrin whenever I am thus called La Mayeux; and yet from my infancy I have never had any other name.

"That is the reason why I should have been so happy if Agricola had availed himself of the occasion of my birthday to call me once by my unpretending name — Madeleine.

"Happily he will for ever remain in ignorance of this wish and this regret."

Florine, more and more moved at the perusal of this page of such painful simplicity, turned over several leaves, and continued:

"I have just attended the funeral of poor little Victoire Herbin, our neighbour. Her father, a carpet-maker, has been working by the month, a long way from Paris. She died at nineteen years of age, without a single relative near her. Her last moments were not painful, and the worthy woman who watched her to the last moment said to us that she had said nothing but these words:

"'At last! At last!'

"And that, as with so much satisfaction, the nurse added.

"Poor, dear girl! she had become so wasted! At fifteen years old she was like a rosebud, and so pretty, so fresh, her chestnut hair as soft as silk. But by degrees she pined away. Her business, as a comber of wool mattresses, killed her. She had been, as they say, for a long time poisoned by the effluvia from the wool; and her occupation was the more unwholesome and dangerous as she worked for poor houses, where the bedding is usually made up of refuse.[1]

[1] We read in the *Ruche Populaire* (the *Public Hive*), an excellent compilation, edited by a body of workmen, and of which we have already spoken:

"MATTRESS-COMBERS.—The dust which escapes from the wool renders combing an occupation very injurious to the health, and the mischief of which is the more increased by the frauds of trade. When a sheep is killed, the neck of the wool is dyed in blood, and it must be made white again in order to sell it. For this purpose it is dipped in lime, which, after having effected the bleaching, partly remains. Then it is the workwoman who suffers, for when she is at her work the lime becomes detached in the form of dust and is drawn into the lungs by the inspiration; it frequently causes cramps in the stomach and vomitings, which bring on a wretched state of health. The greater part of the carders give up the employment, and those who still persist in it have, at least, a catarrh or asthma, which ends in death.

"Then there is the hair, of which even the dearest, that which is called the sample, is not even pure. We may judge by this what must be the commonest sort which the workwomen call the vitriol hair; which consists of the refuse of goat's hair, deer's hair, and the finer bristles, which are first dipped in vitriol, then into dye, to burn and disguise the foreign particles; such as straw, thorns, and even morsels of flesh, which can scarcely be cleared away, and which are frequently met with in working this hair, and whence flies out a dust, which is as noisome as the lime which comes from the wool."

"She had the courage of a lion, and the resignation of an angel, and always said to me, in her small, soft voice, interrupted at times by her short, dry cough, 'I cannot last long, going on as I do, breathing vitriol-powder and lime all day long; I vomit blood, and have sometimes such cramps in my stomach that I faint away with it.'

"'Try another employment,' I said to her.

"'What time have I to learn any other?' she replied; 'and if I could, it is now too late. I am affected, that I feel; it was not my fault,' added the poor girl; 'I did not choose my occupation, — it was my father who chose it. Fortunately, he has no need of me; and when one is dead there is no more trouble — no more fear of want of work.'

"Victoire made this commonplace remark with great sincerity and a kind of satisfaction; and now she is dead, saying, 'At last! At last!'

"Still it is very painful to reflect that the labour which the poor person is compelled to follow, in order to get bread, is often nothing more than a protracted suicide!

"I said so to Agricola the other day, and he replied that there were many other deadly occupations. The workmen employed in making aqua fortis, white lead, and minium, or red paint, amongst others, are attacked by the usual and incurable complaints of which they die.

"'Do you know,' added Agricola, 'do you know that they say, when they are going to their destructive factories, "We are going to the slaughter-house?"'

"This word was so fearfully true that I shuddered. 'And this occurs in our time!' I said, with sorrow; 'all this is publicly known. Amongst so many powerful and great persons does not one think of the mortality which thus decimates his fellows, compelled thus to eat bread that destroys them?'

"'Why, Mayeux, my dear,' replied Agricola, 'whilst it is a question to enlist the people to have them slain in war, there is not much thought about them; and as to

the question of organising things so as to preserve their lives, no one thinks of that but my employer, M. Hardy. And people say, "Bah! the hunger, misery, or suffering of the working classes, what are they? That is not a question of politics." They are deceived,' added Agricola, 'it is more than a question of politics.'

"As Victoire did not leave enough to pay for a church service, there was only the presenting of the body under the porch; for there is not even a simple death-mass for the poor; and then, as we could not give eighteen francs to the curé, no priest accompanied the pauper car to the common ground for burials.

"If funeral ceremonies thus shortened, unattended, cut down, are sufficient in a religious point of view, why devise any other? Is it from cupidity? If these are, on the other hand, inadequate, why make the indigent the sole victim of such inadequacy?

"What is the utility of troubling ourselves with the pomps, the incense, and the singing, of which persons appear to be more or less prodigal or sparing? What's their use? What's their use? They are but vain and terrestrial things, and of these the soul has no further desire, when, glorious, it returns to the hands of Him who gave it.

"Yesterday Agricola made me read an article in a newspaper in which, by turns, great blame and bitter and disdainful irony were employed to assail what was called the pernicious tendency of certain of the people to instruct themselves, to write, read poetry, and sometimes compose verses.

"Rational enjoyments are interdicted to us by our poverty. Is it humane to reproach us with endeavouring to acquire the enjoyments of the mind?

"What ill can result, if, every evening, after a hard day's labour, cut off from every other pleasure or amusement, I please myself, unknown to others, in putting cer-

tain verses together, or in writing in this journal the impressions, good or bad, which I have felt?

"Is Agricola a worse workman because, when he returns home to his mother, he employs his Sunday in composing one of those popular songs which elevate the labours of the artisan, and which say to all, Hope and Brotherhood? Is not this a more proper use of his time than if he passed it in the public-house?

"Ah, those who blame us for these innocent and noble diversions from our painful toils and ills, are deceived when they suppose that, in proportion as the intelligence spreads and refines itself, we support more impatiently our privations and misery, and that our irritation is the more increased against the happy of this world.

"Even admitting that it were so, although it is not so, would it not be better to have an informed and enlightened opponent, whose reason and feeling could be appealed to, than an ignorant, brutal, and implacable enemy?

"But no, on the contrary, hatreds are effaced in proportion as the mind is developed, as the horizon of fellow feeling is widened. We can thus comprehend moral griefs; and then we see that the rich, too, frequently have deep sufferings, and that the similarity of misfortune creates a common bond of sympathy.

"Alas! they, too, lose, and bitterly bewail, idolised children, beloved wives, adored parents,—they, too, especially the females, in the midst of luxury and splendour, often have broken hearts, suffering spirits, and many bitter tears shed in secret.

"Let them have no fears on this point.

"By becoming informed and their equals in understanding, the people learn to pity the rich if they are unfortunate and good, and to pity them still more if they are fortunate and wicked.

"What happiness! What a day of delight! I hardly know how to contain my joy. Oh, yes, man is good,

humane, charitable! Oh, yes, the Creator has implanted in him all generous instincts, and, unless he be a monstrous exception, he never does ill voluntarily.

"I saw what follows just now, — I do not wait until evening to write it, for delay (if I may say so) would chill my heart.

"I was going along with some work required in great haste, and, passing along the Place du Temple, a few steps before me I saw a child not more than twelve years of age, with bare head and feet, in spite of the cold, clad only in a pair of trousers and a smock-frock all in rags, leading by the bridle a large, fat cart-horse, not drawing, but still having his harness on. From time to time the horse stopped and refused to stir, and the child, not having a whip to make him go on, in vain tugged at the rein; the horse remained stock-still. Then the poor little fellow exclaimed, 'Oh, dear, oh, dear!' and cried bitterly, whilst he looked around him to ask assistance from some of the passers-by.

"His dear little face expressed such great affliction that, without reflecting, I attempted a thing which I cannot now think of without smiling, for I must have appeared very odd indeed.

"I have a horrible fear of horses, and still greater dread of making myself conspicuous, but I did not think of either, but armed myself with courage. I had an umbrella in my hand, and, going up to the horse, with the energy of an ant which seeks to shake a large stone with a morsel of straw, I gave him, with all my might, a blow with my umbrella on his hind quarters.

"'Ah, thank you, my good lady!' cried the child, drying his tears; 'give him another blow, if you please, and perhaps he will go on!'

"I redoubled my blow with great heroism, but the horse, either from ill-temper or idleness, bent his knees, laid down, and rolled on the stones; and in so doing, finding himself encumbered with his harness, he broke

it, and completely smashed his large wooden collar. I had moved away as quickly as I could, for fear of being kicked. The child, at the sight of this fresh disaster, threw himself on his knees in the middle of the street, and, clasping his hands, he sobbed out in a voice of agony, 'Help, help!'

"The cry was heard, several of the passers-by came around, and a beating much more effectual than mine was administered to the restive brute, who got up,—but in such a condition, without his harness!

"'My master will beat me,' cried the poor child with renewed sobs; 'I am two hours behind my time, for the horse would not move on, and now only see his broken harness! My master will beat me and turn me away, and then what will become of me, for I have no father or mother?'

"At these words, uttered with a voice of despair, a worthy shopkeeper of the Temple, who was looking on, said, with a sympathising voice:

"'No father nor mother! Come, don't be down-hearted, my poor boy; there are ways and means in the Temple, and we can mend your harness, and, if my gossips are of my mind, you sha'n't go any more with bare head and feet in such weather as this.'

"Her speech was hailed with acclamation, and they led the child and horse away, and, whilst some were engaged in repairing the harness, one shopkeeper gave him a cap, another a pair of stockings, another a pair of shoes, another a good waistcoat, and in a quarter of an hour the boy was warmly clad, the harness repaired, and a tall lad of eighteen with a whip, which he smacked about the ears of the horse as a sort of warning, said to the child, who was looking at his clothes and the shopkeepers as if he thought himself the hero of a fairy tale:

"'Where does your master live, my boy?'

"'Quay of the Canal St. Martin, sir,' was the reply, in a voice broken and trembling with emotion.

"'Well, then,' added the young man, 'I will assist you in leading your horse, who will go well enough with me, and I will tell your master that the delay is not your fault. They ought not to trust a restive horse with a child so young as you.'

"As they were going away the poor little fellow said in a timid voice to the shopkeeper, taking off his hat:

"'Madame, will you let me kiss you?'

"And tears of gratitude filled his eyes. The boy had a good heart.

"This scene of public charity moved me most delightfully, and I followed with my eyes, as long as I could, the young man and the child, who could now scarcely keep up with the horse, who had so speedily become obedient from fear of the whip. Well, I repeat it with pride, the creature is naturally good, and full of pity; nothing could be more spontaneous than this movement of pity and tenderness in this assembly of persons, when the poor boy exclaimed, 'What will become of me, I have neither father nor mother?'

"Unhappy child! Yes, no father nor mother, said I to myself, belonging to a brutish master, who scarcely clothes him with miserable rags, and maltreats him — lying down, no doubt, in some corner of a stable. Poor child! He is still gentle and good in spite of misery and misfortune. I saw very plainly that he was more grateful than rejoiced at the kindness done to him; but perhaps this good disposition, abandoned, without support, without advice, without aid, rendered rough by ill-treatment, will change and become fierce, exasperated; then will come the age of passions, then bad excitements!

"Ah, with the neglected outcast poor, virtue is doubly holy and to be respected!

"This morning, after having, as usual, gently scolded me for not going to mass, Agricola's mother said to

me, and it was so touching from the mouth of her so devoutly a believer:

"'Fortunately, I pray more for you than myself, my poor dear Mayeux; the good God will hear me, and you will, I hope, only go into purgatory.'

"Good soul! Worthy creature! She said these words with so much kindness, so full of earnestness, with a belief so fervent in the happy result of her pious intervention, that I felt my eyes grow moist, and I threw myself around her neck as sincerely and seriously grateful as if I believed in purgatory.

"This has been a fortunate day for me; I think I shall find work; and I owe this good fortune to a young woman full of kind feeling and good heart. She is to take me to-morrow to the convent of Ste. Marie, where she thinks she can find employment for me."

Florine, already deeply affected by the perusal of this journal, started at this passage in which La Mayeux spoke of her, and continued:

"I shall never forget the deep interest, the delicate benevolence, with which this young person received me, — me so poor and wretched. That does not astonish me at all, for she was in Mlle. de Cardoville's service. She is worthy to be about the person of Agricola's benefactress. It will be always pleasant and delightful to me to recall her name, which is as pretty and becoming as her countenance, — it is Florine. I am nothing, I possess nothing; but, if the fervent wishes of a heart deeply impressed with gratitude be heard, Mlle. Florine will be happy, very happy.

"Alas! I am reduced to offer up nothing but wishes for her — nothing else have I — and I can do nothing but recollect and love her."

These lines, which so simply spake the real gratitude of La Mayeux, gave the last blow to Florine's hesitation.

She could not any longer resist the generous temptation which assailed her.

As she had continued the perusal of the various fragments of the journal, her affection and her respect for La Mayeux had increased, and she felt more acutely than ever how infamous it was to surrender, perhaps to sarcasm and bitter disdain, the most secret thoughts of the poor girl. Fortunately good is often as contagious as evil. Purified by all she had read, having strengthened her failing virtue in this vivifying and pure source, Florine, yielding at last to one of those good impulses which sometimes controlled her, left her apartment, taking the manuscript with her, and quite resolved, if La Mayeux had not returned, to return it to the place whence she had taken it, making up her mind to tell Rodin that the second time her search after the journal had been useless, La Mayeux having doubtless detected the first attempt to abstract it.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DISCOVERY.

In the interval which had preceded Florine's resolution to repair her unworthy abuse of confidence, La Mayeux, after a faithful discharge of her painful duty, had returned from visiting the manufactory. Equally struck with Agricola, by the innocent beauty, engaging simplicity, good sense, and sweetness of character exhibited by Angèle, La Mayeux, after a most close and careful scrutiny, had, with magnanimous sincerity, advised the young smith to lose no time in seeking to obtain her affections. The following scene was enacted ere Florine, having finished perusing the manuscript so surreptitiously obtained, had brought herself to the praiseworthy intentions of returning it.

It was ten o'clock in the evening, and La Mayeux, just returned to the Hôtel de Cardoville, had gone into her chamber, and, exhausted by the severe mental conflict she had undergone for so many hours, thrown herself into an armchair. The utmost silence reigned throughout the house, only interrupted by the violence of the wind, as it swayed and shook the trees in the garden. A single light burned in the chamber, the hangings of which were of dark green, whose sombre tints, added to the black dress she wore, served still more to display the more than ordinary paleness of La Mayeux.

Seated beside the fire, her head drooping on her breast, her hands clasped on her knees, the mild, yet melancholy

and resigned, countenance of the poor sempstress bore that look of unutterable sweetness arising from the consciousness of duties well performed.

Like all those whom a long acquaintance with misfortune has accustomed to bear their griefs without exaggeration or display, in fact to receive sorrow as too habitual a visitor to require any parade, La Mayeux was incapable of long indulging in vain and fruitless regrets for what was now irrevocably decided. The blow had been fearfully sudden and painful, and would doubtless long rankle in the heart of the unhappy being on whom it had so unexpectedly descended; but there was equal probability of its becoming one of those chronic sorrows, which formed the part and parcel of her ill-starred existence. And still the noble-minded being, thus writhing in her agony, yet scarcely accusing her severe destiny, found sources of consolation even amidst her present distress; her tender, affectionate nature had been sensitively alive to the demonstrations of regard bestowed on her by her happy rival, Angèle; and her heart swelled with the proudest satisfaction at witnessing the blind confidence with which Agricola awaited her decision respecting his mistress, and the unbounded joy with which he listened to her prognostics of the future happiness that would result from the marriage he so ardently desired.

"And besides," argued La Mayeux, mentally, "at least I shall no more be disturbed (even in spite of my better judgment) by false hopes only, but by suppositions as absurd as unfounded. The marriage of Agricola will put an end to all the wild fancies of my poor brain."

And, last of all, La Mayeux experienced the greatest possible delight in having passed thus firmly and well over the severe trial she had just undergone, as well as for the effectual concealment of her love for Agricola; for the reader has already been told how surpassingly great was the shuddering horror felt by the poor girl at

the idea of the ridicule she felt perfectly convinced must follow the discovery of her insensate passion.

After remaining long absorbed in her deep reverie, La Mayeux arose and walked slowly towards her desk.

"My only recompense for all I have endured," said she, as she prepared her writing materials, "will be to confide this last new and terrible grief to the sad and silent witness of all my sorrows. I shall, at least, have kept the engagement entered into with myself; for believing, from the bottom of my heart, that the object selected by Agricola is calculated to secure his happiness, I have delivered to him my conscientious advice to marry; so when, perhaps in years to come, I shall read over what I have here written, I may possibly find a compensation for my present sufferings."

So saying, La Mayeux drew out the pasteboard box; a cry of astonishment escaped her at the absence of her journal, but this was quickly turned to fear when she perceived in its place a letter addressed to herself.

The features of the poor girl became of the livid hue of death, her knees trembled, and a faintness like that of death stole over her; but gaining power and energy, even from the excess of her terror, she exerted herself sufficiently to break the seal of the mysterious epistle.

As she did so, a note for five hundred francs (20*l.*) fell from the paper on the table, while the eager eye of La Mayeux read the following lines:

"*Mademoiselle:* — The account given by you in your journal of your love for Agricola is at once so amusing as well as original that I cannot deny myself the pleasure of acquainting him with the violent passion he has excited, a fact of which he is far from dreaming; but once known to him, he will of course hasten to return. Advantage will be taken of the present opportunity to admit a number of persons to share in the amusement derivable from the perusal of your love-stricken journal, and of

which they would otherwise have been deprived. Should written copies and extracts be insufficient to gratify general curiosity, printed specimens will be distributed among all who desire them. It would, indeed, be the height of selfishness to keep so fine a treat of the sublime and beautiful to ourselves. Your readers will doubtless be differently affected by your love-lorn effusions; some they will move to laughter, others perhaps to tears; for what may strike some class of persons as touchingly pathetic, will cause inextinguishable laughter and merriment in others, — 'many men, many minds.' But one thing is quite certain, your journal will be the town talk for a time at least, to that I pledge myself. As a person of your very singular ideas may prefer getting out of the way of your triumph, and as you possessed nothing but the rags upon your back when you were admitted, out of charity, into the house where now you seek to rule and govern, giving yourself all manner of insolent and unbecoming airs, ill-suited to one of your appearance as well as pretentions, you are presented with the sum of five hundred francs to pay for the paper used in your love-sick journal, and in order that you may not be quite destitute in the event of your being sufficiently modest to dread the many congratulations with which, by to-morrow, you will be overwhelmed; for of this you may be quite sure, that at the very moment of your reading this, your journal will be in rapid circulation.

"One like yourself,

"A Real Mayeux."

The coarse and insolent tone of mockery displayed in this letter, which was designedly written as though coming from some servant of the house, jealous of the introduction of La Mayeux into the establishment, had been calculated with fiendish skilfulness as sure to produce all the effect desired.

"Gracious God!" were the only words that fell from

the ashy lips of the wretched girl during her first stupor and affright.

If the reader will recall the passionate tenderness with which the unfortunate Mayeux had revealed her love for her adopted brother; the many passages in her journal in which she speaks of the numerous wounds Agricola had unconsciously inflicted on her; and, lastly, her intense horror and dread of ridicule, he may be able to form some idea of her overwhelming shame and utter despair after the perusal of this infamous epistle.

The heart-broken girl thought not for an instant of the noble sentiments, the touching incidents, also recorded in the same journal; the one idea which filled her half distracted brain was, that the following day, not only Agricola himself, and Mlle. de Cardoville, but an insolent and mocking crowd of others, would also be aware of her ridiculous passion, and would pitilessly laugh her to scorn.

So stunning, so unexpected was this blow, that for a time La Mayeux staggered under its violence, and for several minutes she remained mute, passive, and crushed in mind and body; but at length the bitter conviction rose to her mind that a fearful necessity required immediate exertion, — she must lose no time in quitting for ever the hospitable roof which had received and sheltered her after so many misfortunes. The extreme timidity, the sensitive delicacy of the poor girl would not permit her to remain an instant longer in a dwelling where the innermost secrets of her heart had thus been surprised, profaned, and, doubtless, given up to scorn and derision.

She dreamed not of seeking justice or vengeance at the hands of Mlle. de Cardoville; to excite anger and create disturbance in the house, at the very moment she was quitting it, would have been considered by her as ungrateful and disrespectful towards her benefactress. To her it mattered not what motive could have led to the abstraction of her journal, or who had penned the

insulting letter left in its place. Alas! what could a knowledge of either circumstance have availed her, fully determined as she was to fly from the humiliations with which she was threatened?

As had been hoped for, a vague notion took possession of her mind, that her misery was brought about by some menial jealous of the kindness and consideration bestowed on her by Mlle. de Cardoville. Thus, then, the poor girl thought, with despairing agony, that those pages, so painfully confidential, describing feelings she would not have dared breathe in the ear of the most tender and indulgent mother, because written in a manner with the blood of her deepest wounds, too faithfully portrayed, too cruelly described, the writhings of her stricken heart. Yet these very transcripts of her secret sorrows would serve to amuse, nay, perhaps were even now exciting the jeers and vulgar jests of the servants of the hôtel.

The money accompanying this letter, and the insulting manner in which it was offered, served still further to confirm her suspicions as to the source of her present affliction. No doubt the sender feared that a dread of poverty might prevent her from quitting the house. The determination of La Mayeux was taken with that calm and decided resignation so habitual with her. She rose, her eyes sparkling with unnatural brilliancy, while not a tear moistened her pale and haggard cheeks. Alas! the unfortunate girl had shed so many within the last twenty-four hours that the source seemed dried up. With a cold and trembling hand, she hastily wrote the following lines on a slip of paper, which she left beside the bank-note for five hundred francs:

"May Mlle. de Cardoville be recompensed as she deserves for her great goodness to me, and may she add to that kindness by pardoning my abrupt departure from a house I can remain in no longer."

This done, La Mayeux cast into the fire the infamous letter, which seemed to scorch her hands as it passed through them. Then casting a last glance at her chamber, furnished almost luxuriously, she shuddered with involuntary dread as she thought of the misery which awaited her, — of the distress, exceeding all she had ever experienced, even amidst her many trials; for the mother of Agricola had departed with Gabriel. The unfortunate girl could no longer depend upon the almost maternal tenderness and sympathy of the wife of Dagobert.

A lonely, solitary life, embittered by the undying agony of believing that her fatal love was the jest, the derision of all, perhaps of Agricola himself, was all the prospect the future offered to the poor trembling creature, who now prepared to wander forth she knew not whither. But from such a vista of endless wretchedness her very soul recoiled. Then a dark thought suggested itself to her mind; a tremor passed over her, while a smile of bitter exultation played over her pallid features.

Fully resolved to depart without delay, she proceeded towards the door, but, in passing the fireplace, she saw herself reflected in the glass placed over the chimney, her deathlike countenance contrasting strongly with the black dress she wore. Then, for the first time, she remembered that she had no claim to the clothes she wore; and again she remembered the passage in the letter, reminding her of the ragged garments she wore when she first entered that house.

"It is well I thought of it," cried she, in tones of anguish and a smile of bitterness, as she looked at her black dress, "I might have been accused of stealing."

So saying, the young girl, carrying her candle with her, entered her dressing-room, and resumed the miserable garments she had carefully preserved as a sort of pious remembrance of her past misfortunes.

At this moment the tears of La Mayeux broke forth afresh, and she wept long and abundantly. They flowed not at seeing herself thus again clad in the livery of poverty and misery, but from the plenitude of her gratitude; for all these comforts to which she now bade an eternal adieu recalled vividly to her mind the considerate kindness and delicate attention of Mlle. de Cardoville, and yielding to an almost involuntary burst of feeling, she threw herself (as soon as dressed in her former wretched attire) on her knees, in the midst of her chamber, and, mentally apostrophising, —

"Mlle. de Cardoville!" she exclaimed, in a voice broken by convulsive sobs, "farewell for ever! Farewell, kind, generous lady, who deigned to honour me with favours above my utmost endeavours to deserve, and who honoured me even by the appellation of friend! — sister!"

In sudden terror the poor Mayeux rose from her kneeling attitude; she heard some one stealthily approaching by the passage which led from the garden to one of the doors of her apartment, the other door opening upon the salon.

The steps were those of Florine, who (unfortunately too late) was returning with the manuscripts. Alarmed and driven to desperation by the sound of footsteps, which, she believed, came but to proclaim her the scorn and ridicule of the house, La Mayeux rushed from the salon, and, quickly flying through the anteroom, reached the courtyard, tapped with frenzied eagerness against the windows of the porter's lodge, and, as soon as the gate was opened, darted into the street.

The door closed after her, and La Mayeux ceased to be within the cherished precincts of the Hôtel de Cardoville.

Thus was Adrienne deprived of a faithful, vigilant, and devoted guardian, while Rodin was likewise freed

from an active, penetrating antagonist, whom he had always, and with just cause, dreaded.

Having (as has been seen) divined the love entertained by the poor sempstress for Agricola; knowing also of her skill in poesy, and arguing therefrom that she would thus in secret pour forth her fatal and concealed passion, he had instructed Florine to search diligently for some written testimonies of this ill-starred affection. From the success attending this manœuvre arose the coarse and galling epistle, calculating to goad on a mind so sensitively alive as La Mayeux's to the most desperate measures. Of the contents of this epistle, it is but justice to Florine to say she was entirely ignorant, having merely received it in reply to her account of the contents of the journal, which she had, in the first instance, merely glanced over without allowing herself to remove it.

As we have already said, Florine, influenced by a too tardy repentance, only reached the chamber of La Mayeux at the moment when the latter was flying in wild despair from the hôtel.

Perceiving a light in the dressing-closet, Florine hastened thither. On a chair was thrown the black dress just taken off by La Mayeux, while, at a little distance, stood the old trunk in which the poor girl had hitherto religiously preserved her wretched attire of former days; the box was now open and empty.

Heart-stricken by this sight, Florine proceeded to the desk. The disorder in which the various articles were left, the bank-note of five hundred francs, beside which lay the few lines addressed to Mlle. de Cardoville, proved but too clearly the fatal consequences of her obedience to the orders of Rodin, and that the unhappy victim of his persecutions had quitted the house for ever.

Perceiving the utter uselessness of any further attempt, and acknowledging, with a sigh, that her repentance

had come too late to save the unfortunate girl, Florine resigned herself to the necessity of forwarding the manuscript to Rodin. Then, obliged to console herself for the evil she had wrought by fresh arguments of evil, she remembered that the absence of La Mayeux would diminish the chances of discovering her treachery, and render her disgraceful task less hazardous and dangerous.

The day following these events Adrienne received the following note from Rodin, in reply to one which she had written relative to the inexplicable departure of La Mayeux:

"*My dear Young Lady:* — Being obliged to proceed directly to the manufactory of the worthy M. Hardy, whither I am summoned on a most important affair, I am utterly unable to wait upon you and offer my most humble respects. You ask me, 'What am I to think of the sudden disappearance of the young girl I lately took into my house?' In truth, the question is beyond my power to answer; let us hope that future events may explain it to her credit, nay, I feel persuaded it will be so. Only remember what I said to you at Doctor Baleinier's, touching a certain society, and the numerous and secret emissaries it employs to surround perfidiously the persons whom it is requisite to put under a system of espionage.

"I accuse no one, but let us simply recall facts. I have been accused and stigmatised by this very girl, yet your own knowledge and experience assure you, you have not a more faithful or devoted servant than myself.

"She was utterly penniless when you received her, yet in her desk is found the sum of five hundred francs! You have loaded her with benefits, yet she quits your roof without a word, or the smallest endeavour to explain the cause of her unjustifiable flight.

"Still, my dear young lady, I draw no conclusions; I abhor the very idea of condemning unheard. But reflect seriously, and, above all, be well upon your guard, — you have possibly escaped some great danger. To redouble your circumspection, and increase your watchful mistrust of all around you, is the respectful advice of your very humble and most obedient servant,

"RODIN."

Part VIII.
THE FACTORY

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE GATHERING OF THE "LOUPS."

It was Sunday morning. It was on the same day that Mlle. de Cardoville had received Rodin's letter relative to the disappearance of La Mayeux.

Two men were conversing at a table in one of the public-houses in the small village of Villiers, situated at a short distance from M. Hardy's factory.

This village was generally inhabited by workmen at the quarries and stone-cutters employed in working the neighbouring stone-pits. Nothing can be more severe, more exhausting, and worse paid than the labours of these artisans; and thus, as Agricola had told La Mayeux, they established a painful comparison between their lot, miserable as it was, and the almost incredible ease and comfort which the workmen of M. Hardy had, thanks to his generous and sagacious management, as well as the principles of association and companionship which he had established amongst them.

Misfortune and ignorance always originate great evils. Misfortune is easily soured, and ignorance but too often gives way to noxious counsels; and for a long time the good fortune of the workmen of M. Hardy had been naturally envied, but not as yet affected by jealousy or hatred. Soon, however, the secret enemies of this manufacturer, set on by M. Tripeaud, his rival, had their own objects in altering this peaceable state of things, and they were changed.

With diabolical pertinacity, and similar address, they

contrived to excite the worst passions. They commenced, by chosen emissaries, by getting hold of certain quarriers and stone-cutters of the neighbourhood, whose irregular lives had aggravated their miseries. Notoriously known by their turbulence, bold and active, these men exercised a dangerous influence over their peaceable, hard-working, well-disposed companions, but who were easily intimidated by violence. These dangerous ringleaders, already soured by misfortune, had their jealous hatred excited and fomented by pointing out to them the comfort and consideration enjoyed by M. Hardy's workmen. They went further. The inflammatory preachings of an abbé, a member of the Order, who, coming from Paris expressly to preach during Lent against M. Hardy, had had immense influence over these workmen's wives, who, whilst their husbands were at the public-house, hastened to hear the sermon. Taking advantage of the growing alarms of the approach of the cholera, their weak and credulous imaginations were struck with terror when pointing to the factory of M. Hardy as a focus of corruption and damnation capable of drawing down the vengeance of Heaven, and, consequently, this avenging scourge on the district. The men, already bitterly envious, were, moreover, constantly worked upon by their wives, who, excited by the abbé's preaching, raved and uttered maledictions against this stronghold of atheists, who would be sure to draw down such miseries on their country.

Some evil-disposed individuals belonging to the workshops of Baron Tripeaud, and bribed by him (we have before alluded to the interest which this honourable person had in M. Hardy's ruin), had increased the general irritation, and wrought it to a pitch by ripping up one of these terrible questions of companionship, which in our days still unhappily cause bloodshed from time to time.

A great number of M. Hardy's workmen, before

entering into his employ, had become members of a companionship, or fraternity, called the Dévorans;[1] whilst many of the stone-cutters and quarriers of the vicinity belonged to a society called the Loups (wolves), and from time immemorial rivalry the most inveterate had existed between the Loups and the Dévorans, and led to many bloody strifes, the more to be deplored as, in many points of view, the institution of companionships is excellent, inasmuch as it is founded on the fruitful and powerful principle of association. Unfortunately, instead of including all bodies of the state in one fraternal communion, companionship has been broken up into fractions of collective and distinct societies, whose rivalries often break out into fierce and sanguinary collisions.[2]

[1] Devourers is the English translation, but does not express fully the combination as it existed, and exists still, in Paris; much like the fellowship of tailors called "Flints," which existed in England (perhaps still exists), and who, in or about the year 1814-15, "turned out," or "struck," on the factories of Mr. Maberly, the eminent contractor of Paul's Wharf, London, and of whom the ringleaders were tried for conspiracy and punished. All the journeymen tailors who would not join the "Flints" were by them styled "Dungs," and they refused to work at the same boards with them. — *Eng. Trans.*

[2] We should say, to the praise of the working classes, that these sad scenes become the more rare in proportion as they become better informed, and have more consciousness of their own dignity. We should, also, attribute these better tendencies to the right influence of an excellent work on companionship, published by M. Agricola Perdiguier, called *Avignonnais-la-Vertu*, "A Working Carpenter." In this work, filled with information and curious details as to various societies of companionship, M. Agricola Perdiguier protests, with the indignation of an honest man, against the scenes of violence capable of injuring all that is useful and practicable in companionship; and this work, written with remarkable clearness, reason, and moderation, is not only an excellent work, but a noble and praiseworthy act; for M. Agricola Perdiguier has had for a long time to contend strongly, in order to bring back his associates to sensible and peaceable notions. Let us add that M. Perdiguier has instituted, by the aid of no resources but his own, in the Faubourg St. Antoine, an unpretending establishment of the greatest utility to the working classes. He lodges in his house, a model of order and good conduct, about forty or fifty working carpenters, to whom, every evening after the day's work, he gives a course of lectures on geometry and linear architecture applied to the cutting of wood. We have been present at one of these courses, and it is impossible that lectures should be more clearly delivered, or made more easy to the understanding. At ten o'clock in the evening, after the conclusion of the lecture, all the lodgers of M. Perdiguier go to their humble beds (they are forced by the low price of wages to sleep usually four in each small room). M. Perdignier told us that study and instruction are such powerful modes of moralising, that in six years he had sent away but one of his lodgers. "At the end of two or three days," he said to us, "the ill-disposed feel that this is no place for them, and leave of their own accord." We are happy to be able, then, to render our public testimony to a man filled with information, right feeling, and the most noble devotion to the working classes. — EUGENE SUE.

For eight days the Loups, highly excited at all points, longed most eagerly to find an opportunity and excuse to come to loggerheads with the Dévorans; but, as these latter did not frequent the public-houses, and seldom quitted the factory during the week, this had hitherto been impracticable, and the Loups were compelled to await the Sunday with fierce impatience.

Moreover, a great number of quarriers and stonecutters, peaceable men and good workmen, had refused, although Loups themselves, to join in this hostile manifestation against the Dévorans of M. Hardy's factory; and the ringleaders had been obliged to raise recruits amongst the vagabonds and scamps of the barriers, whom the prospect of tumult and disorder had easily induced to enrol themselves under the flag of the warlike Loups.

Such was the muttering fermentation which agitated the little village of Villiers, whilst the two men to whom we have alluded were seated at table in the public-house.

These men had asked for and obtained a private room.

One of them was still young, and tolerably well clad, but his open waistcoat, his loosely tied cravat, his shirt stained with wine, his hair dishevelled, his haggard countenance, his swollen veins, and red eyes, betokened that a night of dissipation had preceded this morning, whilst his heavy and coarse look, his hoarse voice, and his glance, now dull and now sparkling, testified that to the stale fumes of drunkenness of the previous night were now united the first approaches of a renewed inebriety.

The companion of this man said to him, jingling their glasses together:

"Your health, my boy!"

"Yours!" replied the young fellow; "although your appearance has a devilish odd effect on me."

"Devilish odd effect?"

"Yes."

"And why, pray?"

"How did you know me?"

"Are you sorry I ever knew you?"

"Who told you I was confined in Ste. Pélagie?"

"Did I release you from gaol?"

"Why did you do so?"

"Because my heart is good."

"You love me, perhaps, — much about as the butcher loves the ox he drives to the slaughter-house."

"You are insane."

"A man does not pay ten thousand francs (400*l.*) for another without some motive."

"I have a motive."

"What is it? What do you want with me?"

"A jolly companion, who spends his money freely and without thought or care, and passes all his nights as you did the last. Good wine, good cheer, pretty girls, and merry staves! It is not a bad trade, is it?"

After remaining silent for a moment, the young man replied, with a sullen air:

"Why, the evening before I left the prison, did you make it one of the conditions of my freedom that I should write to my mistress that I would never see her again? Why did you insist that I should give you this letter?"

"What a sigh! Do you think still of her?"

"Perpetually."

"You are wrong. Your mistress is far from Paris at this moment; I saw her go away in a diligence before I returned to release you from Ste. Pélagie."

"Yes, I was choking in that gaol, and to get out I would have sold my soul to the evil one; you thought as much, and therefore came to me, only, instead of my soul, you took Céphyse away from me, — poor Queen-Bacchanal! But why — *mille tonnerres!* — will you tell me why?"

"A man who has a mistress whom he is so infatuated with as you with this girl ceases to be a man, and, in a time of trial, would want pluck."

"What time of trial?"

"Drink, man, — let us drink!"

"You make me drink too much brandy."

"Pooh! Look — see me."

"You really frighten me; it seems so devilish. A bottle of brandy does not make you wink an eyelid. You have a cast-iron inside, and a skull of marble."

"I have travelled a good deal in Russia, and there one drinks to warm oneself."

"And here to excite oneself; but let us drink if you will, only it must be wine."

"Absurd stuff! Wine is good for children; men, like us, drink brandy."

"Well, then, let's have brandy; it burns me, and one's head whirls, and then one sees all the flames of hell!"

"Come, I like you now."

"When you said just this minute that I was infatuated about Céphyse, and that in a time of trial I should want pluck, what time did you allude to?"

"Drink, man, — drink."

"One moment, if you please. You see, comrade, that I am not a bigger fool than my neighbour, and, by the few words you have let drop, I guess there's something in the wind."

"Do you?"

"You know I have been a workman, and am acquainted with a great many others, that I am a good sort of fellow enough, and popular with my comrades, and you wish to make use of me as a sort of lure to attract others."

"Go on."

"You are some one employed to get up a riot, — some emissary of a party desirous of a revolt."

"Continue."

"And you are acting for this nameless association, which carries on its business by discharges of musketry."

"Are you a coward?"

"I? Why, I burnt powder in July, and as boldly as any one."

"Are you inclined to do so again?"

"Ah, why this sort of fireworks is as good as another; but, in my opinion, revolutions are more for the agreeable than the useful. All I got out of the Barricades of the Three Days was to burn my trousers and lose my waistcoat. This is all that the people gained in my person. It's all very fine and grand to hear 'Forward! To the charge!' But what good has come of it?"

"You know a good many of M. Hardy's workmen?"

"Oh, oh, that's the reason you have brought me here!"

"It is; and you will see directly several of the workmen from his factory."

"Some of the lads from M. Hardy's wishing for a row? They are too well off for that, — you mistake."

"You will see that very shortly."

"They who are so comfortable, what have they to complain of?"

"What, when their comrades, and those who, not having a good master, are dying of hunger and misery, and they are appealed to join them? Do you believe they will remain deaf to that appeal? M. Hardy is the exception; but let the people give 'one long pull, strong pull, and pull together,' and the exception becomes the rule, and every one is content."

"There is reason in what you say; only it is requisite that the 'long pull' must, indeed, be 'a strong pull,' if it ever makes a good and honest man of my hound of an employer, the Baron Tripeaud, who has made me what I now am, — a good-for-nothing scamp."

"M. Hardy's men are coming — you are their comrade — you have no interest in deceiving them — they

will believe you; so lend me your assistance to induce them to make their decision — "

"As to what?"

"To leave the factory where they are becoming enervated, and getting so selfish as to forget the wrongs and injuries of their brothers — "

"But if they quit the factory, how are they to get a living?"

"Oh, they shall be provided for until the great day."

"And what are they to do till then?"

"What you did last night, — drink, laugh, and sing; and then all the work they will have to do will be to learn the military exercises in their rooms."

"And what induces the workmen to come here?"

"Some one has already spoken to them, — placards have been distributed amongst them, in which they are reproached for their indifference towards their brothers. Well, now, will you support me?"

"I will; and the more because I am really beginning to support myself with considerable difficulty. Céphyse was the only person in the world I cared about. I feel I am in a horrible downhill condition and you are shoving me down still lower; but let the ball roll! If one must go to the devil, it is of very little consequence by what means. Let us drink!"

"Yes; let's drink to our jolly next night's revel, — the last was but a mere rehearsal."

"What stuff are you made off — you! I look at you; but I have not seen you once, even for a moment, blush or smile, or appear moved or excited; but, then, you are like a man made of cast iron."

"I am no longer fifteen years of age, and I must have something quite different to make me laugh; but, to-night, I shall laugh, — yes, to-night."

"I do not know if it is the brandy, or what it is, but, devil rock me, if you don't make me shudder when you say you shall laugh to-night."

So saying, the young man rose from his seat, staggering as he did so; he was getting drunk again. There was a knock at the door.

"Come in!"

The landlord entered.

"What is it?"

"There is a young man below, who says his name's Olivier; he asks for M. Morok."

"I am he; tell him to come up."

The landlord left the room.

"This is one of your men, but he is alone," said Morok, whose coarse features expressed disappointment. "Alone! That surprises me. I expected several. Do you know him?"

"Olivier? Yes, a fair young man, I think."

"We shall see; here he is."

And a young man with an open countenance, at once bold and intelligent, entered the little room.

"Ah, Couche-tout-Nud!" he exclaimed, at the sight of Morok's companion.

"Yes; here I am. Why, it is an age since we met, Olivier!"

"But easily explained, my boy, as we do not work in the same factory."

"But are you alone?" asked Morok.

And pointing to Couche-tout-Nud, he added:

"You may speak before him, — he is one of ourselves. But, again, why are you alone?"

"I am alone; but I have come in my comrades' name."

"Ah!" said Morok, with a sigh of satisfaction. "They consent."

"They refuse; and so do I."

"What! refuse? Then they have no more firmness than women," exclaimed Morok, grinding his teeth with rage.

"Listen!" said Olivier, calmly; "we have received

your letters, — seen your agent; we have had the proof that he was, in fact, affiliated with the secret societies, with several of whose members we are acquainted."

"Well; and why do you hesitate?"

"In the first place, we have no evidence that these societies are ready for a movement."

"But I tell you they are."

"He — he — says it," said Couche-tout-Nud, stammering; "and I confirm it. Forward! On, my boys!"

"That is not sufficient," continued Olivier; "and, moreover, we have reflected upon it. For the last eight days the workshop has been divided! Yesterday we had a very warm, and even painful, discussion; but this morning old M. Simon came to us, and we talked the affair over with him. He convinced us, and now we shall wait — if the outbreak comes — then we shall see —"

"Is this your final resolve?"

"Most decidedly."

"Silence!" exclaimed Couche-tout-Nud, suddenly, listening, and trying to steady himself on his tottering legs; "there is a noise as if of a crowd of people at a distance."

And there was heard a murmuring sound which grew louder every instant, and by degrees increased into a decided tumult.

"What can it be?" said Olivier, surprised.

"Now," said Morok, with a sinister smile, "I remember the landlord told me when I came in that there was a great ferment in the village against the factory. If you and your comrades had been separated from the other workmen of M. Hardy, as I believed, these people who are beginning to clamour would have been with you instead of against you."

"This rendezvous, then, was an ambush contrived to excite one party of M. Hardy's workmen against the other!" exclaimed Olivier; "and you were in hopes

that we should have made common cause with those persons who had been excited against the factory, and that — "

The young man could not continue. A terrific burst of mingled cries, hisses, and yells, made the public-house reëcho again.

At the same moment the owner of the cabaret burst into the room, exclaiming:

"Gentlemen, is there any person here belonging to the manufactory of M. Hardy?"

"I do," said Olivier.

"Then it is all up with you; the Loups have come in crowds inquiring for the Dévorans from M. Hardy's, and they desire to fight out their quarrel; unless, indeed, the Dévorans are willing to forsake the manufactory they at present belong to, and join with them."

"A regular snare," cried Olivier, regarding Morok and Couche-tout-Nud with a threatening air; "had my comrades chanced to be here, we should have been led into a pretty scrape."

"Who do you mean," said Couche-tout-Nud, almost gasping for breath, "when you talk of laying snares and leading you into mischief? You cannot allude to me, Olivier? Impossible!"

"Let the Dévorans come out and fight us like men, or let them join with the Loups!" burst in one simultaneous shout from the infuriated crowd who were pressing to attack the house.

"Come, come!" exclaimed the master of the inn, as, without giving Olivier time to reply, he seized him by the arm, and drawing him towards a window which opened on to the roof of a low pent-house, he cried:

"Jump from this window on to the ledge below, then slide down, and gain the open fields, there is still time for you to do so."

And seeing the young man hesitate, the terrified landlord added:

"Why, what chance have you against at least two hundred persons? A minute longer and you are lost. Do you hear them? They have entered the courtyard, and are coming up-stairs."

And he was right; for at this instant the cries, yells, groans, and other discordant noises were heard with redoubled violence, while the wooden staircase leading to the first floor shook beneath the rapid trampling of the fierce crowd who hurried upwards, exclaiming, in tones of sharp defiance, momentarily brought nearer and nearer:

"Let the Dévorans turn out and fight us like men!"

"Olivier," cried Couche-tout-Nud, almost sobered by the pressing danger, "fly, save yourself while you can!"

But scarcely had he uttered the words when the doors which led from the large salon to the small apartment occupied by himself and party were dashed open with a fearful crash.

"Here they are!" ejaculated the terrified landlord, clasping his hands in wild affright; then, running to Olivier, he almost forced him out of the window, for the young man struggled violently to resist him, and even remained with one leg hanging over the sill of the casement till the landlord forcibly pushed him on to the projecting pent-house, from whence he at once dropped to the ground.

Having closed the window, the landlord returned towards Morok just at the moment when the latter was leaving the room to proceed to the large saloon into which the leaders of the Loup party had just forced their way, while their companions were loudly vociferating on the staircase as well as in the courtyard.

Eight or ten of these rash, unthinking men, who were, unknown to themselves, being urged to all this disorder and outrage, first rushed into the salon armed with thick bludgeons, while their countenances were alike inflamed by rage and intoxication.

A quarryman of gigantic height and herculean proportions, with an old red handkerchief tied around his head and hanging in tattered morsels on his shoulders, while a miserable, half worn goat-skin clothed his chest and shoulders, appeared to direct the movements of the party. He bore in his hand a heavy crowbar, and, advancing with fierce and fiery aspect, glaring eyeballs, and threatening gestures, made directly for the adjoining room, affecting to drive back Morok, and exclaiming, in a voice of thunder:

"Where are the Dévorans? The Loups are ready to fall upon and devour them!"

The landlord quickly opened the chamber door, saying:

"There is no one here, my friends; see, look, and satisfy yourselves there is nobody."

"No more there is," returned the quarryman, much surprised after having thrown a hasty glance around the room. "Where are they, then? We were told there were, at least, fifteen or more of them here. Well, if we had found them, we would have compelled them either to proceed with us at once to attack the manufactory, or else come to a pitched battle, which would have been a smasher for them."

"Never mind," chimed in a second voice, "if they are not here now they will be sure to come, so we will have a little patience and wait for their arrival."

"Yes, yes," resounded from many voices, "let us wait."

"Ah, to be sure!" cried another party; "we shall have a good view of each other."

"If the Loups are anxious to behold the Dévorans," said Morok, "why do they not go and howl defiance around the manufactory where these atheistical miscreants are to be found? Then, at their first summons, their enemies would come forth and join in the fight so much desired."

"Fighting!" repeated Couche-tout-Nud, mechanically, "would there then be a battle?"

"There would," replied Morok, "unless, indeed, the Loups fear to engage in open combat with the Dévorans."

"Then, by way of showing you whether we fear or not," exclaimed the gigantic quarryman, in a voice of thunder, and advancing towards Morok as he spake, "you shall go along with us, and then you shall witness our close and deadly encounter."

An infuriated cry arose from the rest of the party. "Who dares say the Loups fear to meet the Dévorans?"

"It would be the first time if they did!"

"A fight, a fight, and let that end the quarrel!"

"It is time to make things square and equal. Why should we have so many grievances to endure, while they are pampered up and enjoy every comfort?"

"Have they not dared to say that the quarrymen were a set of stupid brutes, good for nothing but to work amid the machinery of the quarries like so many turnspits?"

"And that they (the Dévorans) would strip off the skin from our (the Loups) backs, and make themselves caps with them!"

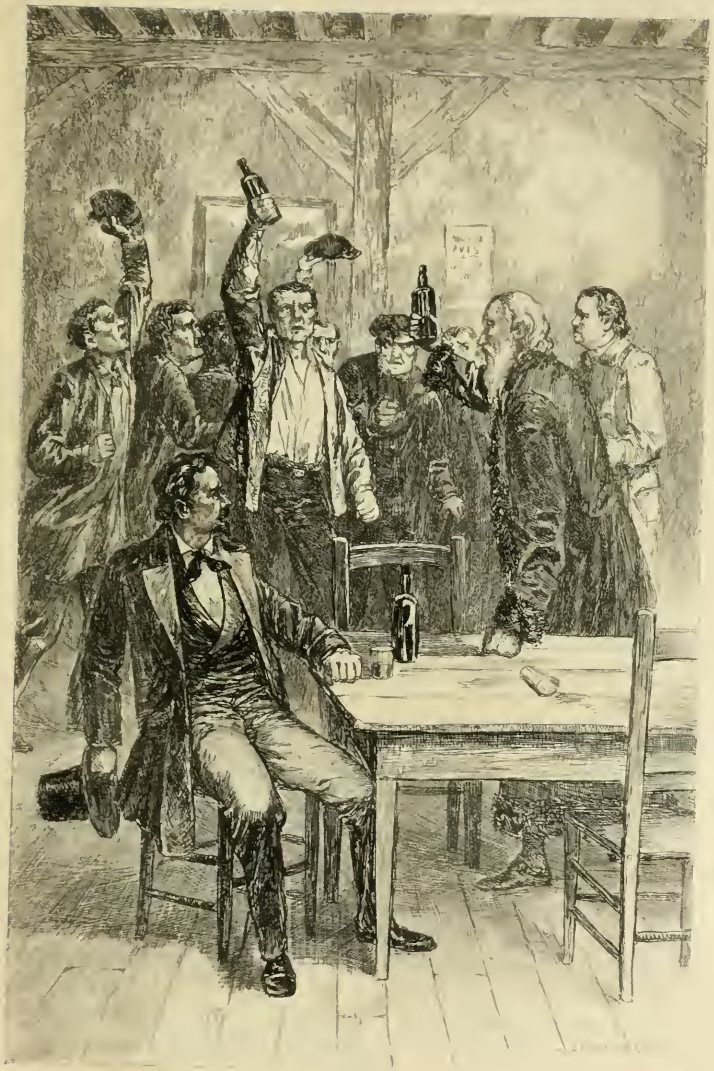
"Why, they are nothing but brute beasts themselves," chimed in an emissary of the abbé's; "a set of graceless pagans who never, any more than their families, show their faces at mass. Shameful, shameful! Enough to bring God's curse upon us all."

"And as our excellent curé said from his pulpit, such conduct would surely have the effect of drawing down the vengeance of Heaven, and bringing the cholera upon us as a scourge and righteous punishment for such neglect of duty."

"That's true enough! I heard the curé with my own ears say so from his pulpit."

"So did all our wives."

"Down with the Dévorans! We are not going to be destroyed by cholera through their sinfulness."



"A fight, a fight!" screamed out a full chorus of discordant voices.

"Off to the manufactory, then, my brave Loups!" exclaimed Morok, in a stentorian voice. "Off to the manufactory, I say!"

"Ay, ay, to the manufactory! To the manufactory!" reëchoed the crowd, with infuriated shouts; and by this time both salon and staircase were filled with a dense mass of half maddened creatures, wrought up to any act of outrage or violence.

Their frenzied cries recalled Couche-tout-Nud completely to himself, and whispering to Morok, he said:

"What do these men purpose doing? There will be bloodshed and murder. I'll have nothing to do with it."

"We shall have time to give the alarm at the factory," replied Morok; "we will slip away on the road thither." Then, calling in a loud voice to the landlord, who was all aghast at this uproar and direful confusion, he said:

"Bring brandy, that we may drink to the health of the brave Loups. I'll stand the treat!"

With these words he flung some silver towards the landlord, who soon disappeared, and as quickly returned, bearing several bottles of brandy, and a quantity of glasses.

"What do you mean by offering us glasses?" cried Morok. "Do you suppose that friends, such as we are, drink to each other in glasses?" And knocking the cork out of the bottle, he held the neck to his lips; and after having drunk, passed it to the gigantic and ferocious-looking quarryman.

"With all my heart!" exclaimed the latter. "Here's to our friend and his treat; and I say he's a cur that refuses. This is a prime whet to sharpen the fangs of the Loups."

"Help yourselves, friends!" said Morok, distributing the bottles among the crowd.

"I tell you," murmured Couche-tout-Nud, comprehending, in spite of his intoxicated condition, all the dangers to be apprehended from men so unnaturally excited, "this will end in blood;" but his words passed unheeded, and having drunk their fill, the riotous mass quitted the premises, to proceed, shouting and hallooing, towards the factory of M. Hardy.

Such of the work-people, and other inhabitants of the village, who had kept aloof from these hostile measures (and they formed a large majority), did not show themselves as the tumultuous rabble passed through the principal street; but a large body of women, rendered fanatical by the preaching of the abbé, cheered them on, and encouraged the formidable band of insurgents by loud and clamorous notes of approval.

At the head of the rioters marched the herculean quarryman, brandishing his formidable crowbar, while behind him flocked, in wild disorder, a crowd of half drunken, desperate men, some carrying bludgeons, others stones, or any other missile they could collect. Their brains on fire with the copious libations of brandy, so unsparingly dealt out to them, they were in a state of almost frantic excitement, while the expression of their flushed and inflamed countenances was fearful to behold; and the most frightful consequences might be expected from beings so completely at the mercy of the fiercest and most ungoverned passions.

Holding each other by the arm, and walking four or five abreast, the Loups wrought themselves up still more, by singing in loud voices their different war-songs, repeating the various choruses with increasing wildness and savage exultation. The last couplet concludes as follows:

"Let's on, brave boys, with courage bold,
Let's raise our arm with strength;
Prudence avaunt! for now, behold,
We face our foes at length!

Sons of a king of glorious name,
Shame blanches not our cheek!
Then let us bravely seek,
Or death, or lasting fame.
Sons of King Solomon the great are we,
Then, let one daring effort see
Us dead or free!"

Morok and Couche-tout-Nud had disappeared while the tumultuous crowd were rushing in swarms from the public-house to repair to the factory of M. Hardy.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE "MAISON COMMUNE."

WHILST the Loups, as we have seen, were preparing for a furious attack against the Dévorans, the factory of M. Hardy presented the appearance that morning of a holy-day quite in accordance with the serenity of the sky; for the wind was northerly, and the weather cold enough for a fine day in March.

Nine o'clock had just struck by the clock of the Maison Commune of the workmen, which was separated from the workshops by a wide walk planted with trees.

The rising sun threw its beams on the imposing mass of buildings situated a league from Paris, in a spot as pleasant as healthy, and whence could be seen the wooded and picturesque banks which on this side command a view of the great city.

Nothing could be more plain and cheerful than the Maison Commune of the work-people. The roof of red tiles came beyond the white walls, intersected here and there by large courses of bricks, which contrasted agreeably with the green colour of the outside blinds of the first and second stories.

These buildings, exposed to the south and east, were surrounded by a vast garden of ten acres in extent; in some places, planted by trees in quincunxes; and in others, in kitchen-gardens and orchards.

Before we continue this description, which may, perhaps, seem almost magical, let us first declare that the marvels of which we are about to sketch the picture

ought not to be considered as utopian or dreams; but, on the contrary, nothing is more true and actual, and, let us add, and not only add, but prove (and in these times, such a proof will give singular weight and interest to the assertion), these marvels were the result of an excellent speculation, and eventually produced an investment as profitable as certain.

To undertake a worthy, useful, and great work; to imbue a considerable number of human creatures with an ideal state of comfort, when compared with the frightful and almost murderous destiny to which they are almost condemned; to instruct them, and elevate them in their own eyes; to induce them to prefer to the low habits of the public-house, or rather to those intoxicating tastes which these unhappy persons seek there to their ruin, in order to escape the consciousness of their miserable destiny, — to make them prefer to this the pleasures of the mind, the amusements of the arts; to make mankind moral through their happiness; in a word, thanks to a noble commencement to an example of easy copy, to take a place amongst the benefactors of society, and at the same time to find it a most remunerative matter, — all this appears fabulous. Such was, however, the secret of the marvels of which we write.

Let us now enter the interior of the factory.

Agricola, ignorant of the disappearance of the poor Mayeux, gave himself up to the brightest hopes when he thought of Angèle, and finished his toilet with no small care, in order to go and see his betrothed.

Let us say two words as to the lodgings which the smith occupied in the Maison Commune at the incredibly low price of sixty-five francs a year, like the other single men.

This lodging was on the second floor, and consisted of a very nice bedchamber and closet, looking towards the south and to the garden. The floor made of deal

was perfectly white; the iron bedstead had a palliasse of maize leaves, an excellent mattress, with soft blankets; a gas-pipe and a calorific tube gave, when needed, light and comfortable warmth to the apartment, which was decorated with a pretty Indian paper, with curtains to match. A chest of drawers, a walnut-tree table, several chairs, etc., a small bookcase, completed Agricola's furniture; whilst in the closet, which was large and light, was a chest to hold clothes, a table for articles of washing, and a large zinc basin, over which was a tap, which supplied water at will.

If we compare this agreeable, wholesome, and convenient apartment to the dark, dismal, cold, and dilapidated attic, for which the worthy fellow paid ninety francs a year in his mother's house, to reach which he had to walk every night more than a league and a half, we may understand the sacrifice which his affection made for that excellent woman.

Agricola, after having cast a proud and satisfactory glance in his looking-glass, after combing his moustache and large *impériale*, left the chamber to go and join Angèle in the common laundry. The passage along which he passed was large, lighted up from above, and boarded with deal, which was kept as white as snow.

In spite of some seeds of discord thrown some time since by M. Hardy's enemies in the midst of this association of workmen until then so fraternally united, there were heard joyful songs in almost every room along the corridor; and Agricola, as he passed by several open doors, exchanged a hearty "good morning" with many of his comrades.

The smith ran quickly down the staircase, crossed the bowling-green planted with trees, in the midst of which a fountain threw out sparkling jets of water, and reached the other wing of the building. There was the room in which a party of wives and daughters of the associated workmen, who were not employed in the factory, made

up all the furniture for the apartments. This arrangement, added to the vast saving which was made in the purchase of the materials wholesale, being carried out in the factory by the Association, reduced immensely the retail cost of every article.

After having crossed the linen room, a very large apartment looking into the garden, very airy in the summer and very warm in the winter, Agricola went and rapped at the door of Angèle's mother's room.

If we have a few words to say with respect to this apartment, which was on the first floor looking to the east, and with a view of the garden, it is because it offered a sample of the housekeeper's dwelling in the Association at a rent still incredibly low of 125 francs by the year.[1]

A sort of entrance from the corridor led to a very large apartment, on each side of which was a chamber somewhat smaller, intended for a family when the sons or daughters were too big to sleep any longer in one of the two dormitories arranged like the dormitories at schools, and intended for children of both sexes. Every night the care of these dormitories was entrusted to the father or mother of a family belonging to the Association.

The apartment to which we now refer was, like all the rest, entirely destitute of any kitchen materials, all the meals being had in common in another part of the building, and, therefore, was kept with great order and cleanliness. A good-sized carpet, a comfortable armchair, some pretty cups and saucers on a shelf of

[1] M. Adolphe Bobierre, in a small work lately published (*De l'Air considéré sous le Rapport de la Salubrité*), enters into singular and actual details as to the indispensable necessity for the renewal of air for the preservation of health. It results from the experience of science that, in order to preserve a man in a wholesome condition, he requires six to ten cubic metres (eight to twelve yards) of fresh and renewed air every hour. One shudders, then, in reflecting on the dark and stifling workshops where such quantities of workmen are crowded together. Amongst the excellent conclusions of M. Bobierre's pamphlet we may quote the following, joining with him in calling the attention of the Council of Health, which daily does so much good, to this, "As soon as any workshop has more than ten workmen, it should be inspected by delegates of the Committee of Health, who should certify that its arrangements are not such as to affect the health of the artisans who are employed there."

deal nicely varnished, several pictures hung from the walls, a clock of gilt bronze, a bed, a chest of drawers, and *secrétaire* of mahogany announced that the lodgers in these rooms added some trifling superfluities to their necessary furniture.

Angèle, who from this time may be considered as the betrothed of Agricola, justified in every particular the flattering portrait drawn by the smith at his interview with poor La Mayeux. This charming young girl, who was about seventeen years of age, dressed with equal simplicity and neatness, was seated beside her mother. When Agricola entered, she blushed slightly as she saw him.

"Mademoiselle," said the smith, "I have come to fulfil my promise, if your mother consents."

"Certainly, M. Agricola, I consent," replied the young girl's mother, cordially; "she would not go and see over the Maison Commune and the buildings either with her father, her brother, or with me, that she might have the pleasure of seeing it to-day (Sunday) with you. So much the better for her, as you, who talk so well, can do the honours of the house to her who is a stranger in it, and for the last hour she has been waiting for you with the greatest impatience."

"Excuse me, mademoiselle," said Agricola, gaily, "whilst I was thinking of the pleasure of seeing you I lost an hour. This is the only excuse I can offer."

"Ah, mother," said the young girl to her mother, in a tone of gentle reproach, and blushing deeply, "why did you say that?"

"Is it true or not? I did not say it reproachfully, quite the contrary. Go, my dear, M. Agricola will explain to you better than I can how deeply all the workpeople of the factory are indebted to M. Hardy."

"M. Agricola," said Angèle, tying the ribands of her very pretty cap, "what a pity your good little adopted sister is not with us."

"What, La Mayeux! You are right, mademoiselle; but it is only a pleasure delayed, the visit she paid us yesterday was not the last."

The young girl, after having kissed her mother, went out, taking Agricola's arm.

"Indeed, M. Agricola," said Angèle, "if you knew how much I have been surprised when I came into this nice house, I who had been accustomed to see so much misery amongst the poor working people in the country — misery which I have shared, too — whilst here everybody seems so happy, so contented! It is like a fairy tale. Really, I think I must be dreaming; and when I asked my mother for an explanation of this fairy tale, she replied, 'M. Agricola will explain all this to you.'"

"Do you know why the gratifying task gives me so much pleasure, mademoiselle?" said Agricola, with a tone at once serious and tender. "It is because nothing could happen more apropos."

"How, M. Agricola?"

"To show you this house, and point out to you all the advantages of our Association, is as if I were to say to you, 'Here, mademoiselle, the artisan, certain of the present and certain of the future, is not compelled, like so many of his fraternity, frequently to renounce the sweetest hopes of the heart — the desire of choosing a companion for life, in the fear of uniting his own misery to another misery.'"

Angèle looked down and blushed.

"Here the workman may, without uneasiness, give himself up to the hope of the sweet enjoyment of a family, quite sure that he will not hereafter be heart-broken at the sight of the horrible privations of those who are most dear to him. Here, thanks to order, labour, the right application of each man's ability, men, women, and children live happy and content. In a word, in order to explain all this to you," added Agricola, smiling, and with a most tender look, "it is to

prove to you, mademoiselle, that here nothing can be more reasonable than to love — nothing wiser than to marry."

"M. Agricola," replied Angèle, with a voice full of emotion, and blushing still deeper, "suppose we begin our walk."

"Instantly, mademoiselle," replied the smith, delighted at the agitation he had caused in this ingenuous breast; "here we are close to the dormitory of the little girls, — the little warblers who have left their nests this long time; let us go there."

"Willingly, M. Agricola."

The young smith and Angèle entered at once into a spacious dormitory, closely resembling that of a well-regulated school. The small iron beds were symmetrically arranged; at each extremity were the beds of two married women who had families, and who, in turns, were the superintendents.

"Oh, how nicely this dormitory is arranged, M. Agricola. How beautifully clean. Who attends to it so carefully?"

"The children themselves. There are no servants here, and there is an immense rivalry existing amongst these infants as to who can best make the beds, and it amuses them quite as much as if they were making their doll's bed. Little girls, as you must be aware, are very fond of playing at housekeeping. Well, here they play at it in earnest, and it is remarkably well done — "

"Ah, I understand; their natural inclinations for certain amusements are brought into play here."

"That is the whole secret, and you will see them in each department very usefully employed, and overjoyed at the importance which their occupations give them."

"Ah, M. Agricola," said Angèle, with timidity, "when we compare these nice dormitories, so healthy and so warm, to those wretched garrets, cold as ice, where the children are huddled together on wretched palliasses,

frozen with cold, as is the case with almost all the working people in our provinces — "

"And in Paris, mademoiselle, it is still worse."

"Oh, how good, generous, and, moreover, how rich, M. Hardy must be, to spend so much money — in doing so much good!"

"I shall very much astonish you, mademoiselle," said Agricola, smiling; "so much so, that, perhaps, you will not believe me."

"Why not, M. Agricola?"

"Assuredly there is not a kinder-hearted, more generous man in the world than M. Hardy; he does good for the sake of good, without thinking of his interest; but, suppose, mademoiselle, he was the most selfish, interested, avaricious man in the world, he would find an enormous profit in making us all as happy and comfortable as we are."

"Can that be possible, M. Agricola? You say so, and I must believe you; but if to do so much good is so easy, and even so profitable, why is there not more of it done?"

"Ah, mademoiselle, three conditions are required, very rarely combined in the same person: Knowledge, power, will."

"Alas! yes, those who know perhaps cannot."

"And those who can do not know, or will not."

"But how does M. Hardy find so much advantage in the good which he enables you to enjoy?"

"That I will explain to you presently, mademoiselle."

"Oh, what a delightful, sweet smell of fruit!" said Angèle, suddenly.

"It is the general fruit-room, which is close by; and I will bet a wager that you will see, near at hand, several of our small birds of the dormitory employed, not in stealing, but at work."

Agricola opened a door and led Angèle into a good-sized room, with shelves, on which winter fruits were

nicely arranged, and several children from seven to eight years of age, clad neatly and warmly, and rosy with health, were gaily employed, under the superintendence of a woman, in picking out and examining the spoiled fruit.

"You see," said Agricola, "that everywhere, and as much as possible, we employ children. These occupations are amusements for them, and suit the stir and activity of their age, and so the time of women and young girls is devoted to much more useful occupation."

"True, M. Agricola; and really how very wisely all this is arranged!"

"And if you saw the little children in the kitchen, you would be surprised at the services they render; with one or two women to direct them they do the work of eight or ten servants."

"Why," said Angèle, smiling, "at this age children are so fond of playing at preparing the dinner that these must be delighted."

"Precisely so; and under the idea of playing at gardening, it is they who in the garden weed the ground, gather the fruit and vegetables, wall the flowers, rake the walks, etc.; in a word, this army of working youngsters, who usually await ten or twelve years of age before they can be of any service, are here made very useful; and except three hours school-time — quite enough for them — from the age of six or seven years their amusements are, in fact, serious occupations, and, in truth, these dear little things, by saving the more powerful arms, which are exercised for their living, earn more than they cost; and then, indeed, mademoiselle, do you not think that, in the sight of infancy thus mingling with all labours, there is something soft, pure, and almost sacred, which puts a right restraint on words and actions? The coarsest man respects childhood."

"The more I reflect, the more I see how greatly all

this is calculated to effect general benefit!" said Angèle, with warmth.

"But it has not been effected without trouble; there was a routine to establish, prejudices to subdue. But look, Mlle. Angèle, here is the common kitchen," added the smith, with a smile; "is it not as imposing as the kitchen of a barrack or some large boarding-school?"

In truth, the kitchen of the Maison Commune was immense. All the utensils shone with brightness, and, thanks to arrangements as remarkable as they are economical in modern science (always denied to the poor classes, to whom they are of most importance, because they can only be carried on upon a large scale), not only were the fireplace and the stoves kept alight with a quantity of fuel, half as small as that which each private kitchen would singly have used, but the excess of heat is employed by means of a calorific, admirably managed to diffuse an equal temperature throughout all the chambers of the Maison Commune.

There also, under the direction of two active women, the children were usefully employed. Nothing could be more comic than the serious looks of the children at work in the kitchen; and it was the same in the bake-house, where they made, at a vast reduction of cost (by buying the wheat wholesale), that excellent household bread, a wholesome and nutritive mixture of pure wheat flour and rye, so preferable to that white and light bread which too often acquires those qualities by the aid of unwholesome substances.

"Good day, Madame Bertrand," said Agricola, gaily, to a kind-looking matron who was gravely contemplating the slow evolutions of several spits worthy of Gamacho's wedding, so gloriously were they laden with pieces of beef, mutton, and veal, which were beginning to assume a delicious gold-brown colour that was most appetising. "Good day, Madame Bertrand," said Agricola, "according to custom, I cannot pass the kitchen door; and I

wish to introduce this young lady to its acquaintance, as she has only been here for a few days."

"Oh, pray look in and admire — particularly that young party around the table — see how industrious and well-behaved they are."

So saying, the matron pointed with a large basting-ladle she held in her hand, as a sort of culinary sceptre, to a group of children of both sexes deeply absorbed in the various occupations entrusted to them, such as peeling potatoes, picking herbs, etc.

"Why, we shall have a second Belshazzar's feast, eh, Madame Bertrand?" said Agricola, smiling.

"To be sure we shall, my lad; why, are not all our meals feasts? Here is to-day's bill of fare. Good vegetable soup, with bouillon, roast beef, and potatoes; salad, cheese, and fruit. Oh, but I forgot, to-day being Sunday, we are to have baked plum-puddings, which are now being prepared by Mother Denis at the bakehouse; and I doubt not but that just now the oven and the puddings are alike hot!"

"Upon my word, Madame Bertrand, your description makes me feel desperately hungry," said Agricola, sportively. "Ah, it is very easy to know when it has been your turn to preside over the kitchen!" added he, in a flattering tone.

"Go along with you, making game of an old woman," said the chief of the victualling department, gaily.

"One thing surprises me above all, M. Agricola," said Angèle to her companion, as they proceeded onwards; "it is to compare the insufficiency and unwholesome food of the working class in our part of the country with what I see here."

"And yet we don't spend more than twenty-five sous a day in being far better fed here than we could be for three times the sum in Paris."

"Really, it seems incredible; and how do you account for this wonderful advantage?"

"It is one of the magical wonders produced by the wand of M. Hardy. I will explain it all to you directly."

"Oh, how I long to see this good M. Hardy!"

"Then you will soon have your wish gratified — perhaps to-day — for we expect him every minute; but here we are at the refectory, which I believe you have never seen, since your family, like most others, prefer having their meals sent to them. Just see what a very nice, cheerful room it is, looking out on the garden, and exactly opposite the fountain."

The refectory was a long, well-constructed building, having eight large windows looking out upon a well-kept garden. Tables, covered with highly polished oilcloth, were ranged down each side, so that during winter the room served as a general rendezvous for the different workmen who, when the labours of the day were ended, preferred assembling together here to passing the evening alone, and where they amused themselves according to their several tastes, either in reading, conversation, with cards, or any light occupation; here, in an apartment well warmed and brilliantly lighted by gas, they refreshed and recreated themselves against the morrow's toil.

"But," said Agricola, "you will be better pleased with this building when I tell you that twice a week we have a sort of ball here, and on alternate evenings we get up a concert."

"Do you, indeed?"

"Yes, I assure you," replied the smith, with a sort of pride, "we have amongst us several excellent practical musicians, quite able to furnish the necessary music for our balls; and then, twice a week, we practise singing all together, men, women, and children.[1] Unfortunately, during the past week, our concerts have been interrupted by some unpleasant and unexpected disturbances in the factory."

[1] We were among the number of those admitted to the admirable concerts of the "Orpheon," where more than one thousand work-people, men, women, and children, sang with marvellous precision and effect.

"How charming it must be to hear so many voices all singing together!"

"I can assure you it produces a very fine effect, and M. Hardy has always greatly encouraged a mode of recreation which he says (and with much reason) exercises so powerful an influence on the mind and manners."

"For a whole winter he had here, at his own expense, two pupils of the celebrated M. Wilhelm, since which time our singing has greatly improved; and really, Mlle. Angèle, without any vanity, I may venture to say that it is impossible to imagine anything more affecting than to hear upwards of two hundred voices chanting forth in one harmonious strain some stirring hymn in favour of liberty and labour, — you must hear them, and then I feel sure you will agree that there is grandeur and sublimity, almost heart-stirring, in this simultaneous burst of full, sonorous sounds."

"Indeed, I doubt it not; but how delightful to live in such a place as this, where all is joy and pleasure, — for labour, thus blended with amusement, must cease to be a task, and create nothing but happiness and real enjoyment!"

"Alas!" replied Agricola, "we have here our share in the common lot of griefs and sorrows. Do you see that building standing out at a distance from the factory?"

"Yes; what is it?"

"Our infirmary; happily, thanks to our wholesome food, pure air, and excellent regulations, it is very seldom full. An annual collection among ourselves enables us to have a most skilful doctor; besides which, we have a sort of club, so managed, that in case of illness, a member of it receives two-thirds of what he would earn if in good health."

"What a very excellent plan! But please to tell me, M. Agricola. What is that I see on the other side of the greensward?"

"It is the wash-house and laundry, where there is a continual supply of hot and cold water; the building you perceive adjoining is the drying-house; farther still are the granaries and stables for the use of the horses employed in the manufactory."

"And now, M. Agricola, that you have described all these wonders to me, are you able to tell me the secret by which they are brought about?"

"In less than ten minutes, mademoiselle, all that will be made clear to you!"

Unfortunately the ardent curiosity of Angèle was not fated to be immediately gratified. The young couple were now close to a sort of open trellis-work which bounded the garden on the side where the principal alley ran, separating the workshops from the Maison Commune. All at once, the distant sound of trumpets and other martial music came swelling on the breeze; then the quick tread of two rapidly approaching horses, followed by the appearance of a general officer, mounted on a handsome long-tailed, coal-black charger, decked with crimson housings. The officer wore the style of dress adopted under Napoleon, that is to say he had high boots reaching above his knees, and white breeches, while his blue uniform glittered with its rich golden embroidery. The broad red riband of the Legion of Honour was tied around his right epaulette, which presented one blaze of silver, while his hat, deeply bordered with gold, displayed the floating white plume, the peculiar distinction of the maréchals of France.

A more imposing specimen of a brave, chivalric soldier, accoutred in military costume, and mounted on his warlike steed, could not be presented to the eye.

When Maréchal Simon (for it was he himself) reached the place where Angèle and Agricola were standing, he pulled his horse up suddenly, descended lightly, and threw the reins to a servant in livery, who followed him on horseback.

"Where shall I wait, M. le Duc?" demanded the groom.

"At the end of the alley," replied the maréchal. Then taking off his hat with an air of respectful deference, he walked quickly on, still holding it in his hand to meet some person who was as yet unseen by either Angèle or Agricola.

The object of the maréchal's eager, yet deferential search now made his appearance at the other end of the walk, — it was an old man, with a countenance at once energetic and intelligent; he wore a neat, clean blouse, a cloth cap covered his long white locks, while, his hands tucked in his pockets, he was contentedly smoking an old meerschaum.

"A good day, and many of them, my dear father," cried the maréchal, embracing with all the warmth of boyish affection his aged parent, who, after holding him in a long and tight embrace, exclaimed, observing that he continued to keep his hat off:

"Come, come, my boy, put on your hat, no ceremony with your old father, I beg! But," added he smilingly, "how gay you are to-day!"

"My dear father, I have just come from a review close by, and I availed myself of the opportunity to pay you an early visit."

"Quite right! But then I hope your coming will not deprive me of the pleasure of seeing my dear little granddaughters."

"Not at all, my dear father; they are coming — the carriage will bring them."

"But what has occurred, my good lad, to make you so unusually serious to-day?"

"The truth is, dear father," replied the maréchal, with an appearance of deep and painful emotion, "I have to speak to you upon some very serious subjects."

"Come indoors with me, then," said the old man, growing uneasy.

And with these words, the maréchal and his father, turning in the direction of the circuitous path, disappeared from the view of Angèle and Agricola. As for Angèle, she could not restrain her surprise at finding that a glittering general officer, styled by his attendant "M. le Duc," could be son to an old working man, dressed in a common blouse. After trying in vain to repress her curiosity, she looked towards Agricola with a bewildered air, and said:

"M. Agricola — pray tell me — this old man in the blouse — "

"Is the father of the Maréchal Duc de Ligny, the friend — yes," continued Agricola, in a tone of deep feeling, "I may presume to say, the friend of my father, who for upwards of twenty years fought under his command."

"Wonderful!" said Angèle; "so high in rank, yet so tender and respectful to his old father! Ah, the maréchal must possess a noble heart! But why does he permit his father to work for his living?"

"Because that father would not quit his employment or the manufactory for any inducement that could be held out to him; he was born a workman, and a workman he will die, spite of his son being a duke and a marshal of France"

CHAPTER XX.

THE SECRET.

When Angèle had recovered from the very natural astonishment caused by the arrival of Maréchal Simon, Agricola said to her, smilingly:

"I must not avail myself of this little interruption to our conversation to evade my promise of telling you the secret of all the wonders of our Maison Commune."

"Indeed, M. Agricola," replied Angèle, "I should not have allowed you to escape its performance. I am already too much interested in all I have seen and heard."

"Then please to listen attentively, whilst I explain how M. Hardy, by the simple witchcraft of employing three cabalistical words, has brought all these marvels to bear. The words gifted with such magic power are: Association, Community, and Fraternity. We have learned to know and to feel the full value of these words, which have effected advantages equally great both to M. Hardy and ourselves."

"That is the point which strikes me as so very remarkable, M. Agricola."

"Suppose, mademoiselle, that, instead of being what he is, M. Hardy had been a close-minded, hard-hearted man, thinking merely of his own gain, he would reason thus: 'What do I require to make my manufactory return a good profit? First-rate workmen, strict economy in the raw material, judicious occupation of the time of the work-people; in fact, a rigid attention to the most economical mode of producing the article required, in

order to be enabled to offer it as cheaply as possible in the market, with as great perfection as attainable, in order to obtain the best prices given.'"

"Certainly, M. Agricola, no manufacturer could desire more."

"Well, then, mademoiselle, all these points might have been accomplished, as they have been; but now, in this manner, in merely a speculative view, M. Hardy would have said: 'If my work-people live at a distance from the manufactory, it will cost them both time and labour to come and go; as they must necessarily rise earlier in the morning, it will diminish their hours of sleep, and to take from the repose so necessary to recruit the strength of a working man is a false calculation; in proportion as the health of the artisan suffered, so would his work. Then, during severe weather, the long journey to the factory would be rendered still worse; the workman arriving wet, cold, and weary, what could be expected from his labour?'"

"That is unfortunately but too true, M. Agricola. When I was at Lille, I often reached the manufactory wet to the skin, from having been exposed all the way to a cold, drenching rain, and sometimes I could scarcely work from the chilliness and shivering it brought on."

"Well, then, Mlle. Angèle, the calculating manufacturer would say: 'Now, by lodging my work-people close to the factory, I obviate this difficulty. Let us calculate: the married artisan pays as an average price, in Paris, about 250 francs (10*l.*) a year; for that he has two miserable rooms, with a small closet, the whole dark, confined, and ill ventilated, in some close, unhealthy neighbourhood. There he lives, cramped up with his sickly, squalid family, himself ailing and enfeebled, and what labour can be expected from a weakened frame? As for the single workmen, who require a smaller lodging, they usually pay about 150 francs (6*l.*) a year. Now just let us reckon: I employ 146 married workmen;

these men then pay, altogether, for the wretched dog-holes they inhabit, 36,500 francs per annum. I also employ 115 unmarried men, who also pay in the whole 17,280 francs annually, making a total of fifty thousand francs for rent, the interest of a million.'"

"Really, M. Agricola, who would think that so immense a sum could be produced by uniting the price of so many humble lodgings?"

"Yes, it is even so, mademoiselle, — fifty thousand francs a year; the interest producible by the investment of a million francs. 'So, then,' says our speculator, 'in order to persuade my workmen to give up their dwellings in Paris, I will offer them great advantages; I will even reduce what they now pay for rent to one-half, and, instead of unwholesome chambers, they shall have large, airy apartments, with facilities for having them both warmed and lighted at a very small cost; thus 146 married men will pay me only 125 francs for rent, and 115 single men, seventy-five francs, making a total of from twenty-six to twenty-seven thousand francs. A building large enough to accommodate such a number of persons will cost me at the most five hundred thousand francs.[1] I shall then, at least, get five per cent. for my money, which will be a safe investment, since I can always pay myself out of the wages of my work-people.'"

"Ah, M. Agricola, I begin to see how advantageous it is to do good, if even considered in a pecuniary light."

"And I for one," answered Agricola, "am quite sure that all affairs conducted with honour and integrity are profitable in the end; but to return to our speculator.

[1] This estimate is correct, though perhaps a little exaggerated. A similar building, about a mile from Paris, near Montrouge, with all the vast dependencies, such as kitchen, wash-house, scullery, etc., reservoir for gas, water, apparatus for heating the rooms, etc., and surrounded by a garden of ten acres, would have cost, at the period of this history, scarcely five hundred thousand francs; and these details are still further confirmed by the opinion of an experienced builder especially consulted. This, then, is clearly proved, that for the price usually paid by workmen for their small lodgings, the same number of men might be comfortably and healthily accommodated by the owner of the building, who would receive ten per cent. for the interest of his money.

'Now,' says he, 'my workmen are comfortably lodged close to their work, consequently they enter upon their employment each day cheerful, and able to perform their labour; but that is not enough, the English workman, living upon good and solid food, and drinking excellent beer, can in the same space of time perform twice as much work as the French workman,[1] partaking only of a feeble and injurious nourishment, more enfeebling than strengthening, owing to the great adulteration of the articles employed. My work-people would then work better, in proportion as they were better fed; but how can I effect this? By acting upon the same plan as that adopted in barracks, schools, and in prisons, which is to club together, and so to provide a sum impossible to realise by any single effort, or without such a combination. Now if my 260 workmen, instead of each making a miserable attempt at cookery, would join, and only have one really good and excellent table, what an infinite advantage for them, and for me also. Two or three active, industrious women would be sufficient, with the assistance of children, to prepare the repasts. Then, instead of buying wood and coals in small quantities, and at almost double its price,[2] my work-people, with my guarantee for the payment (and I should always have security in their wages), might, by thus clubbing together, lay in large stocks of wood, flour, butter, oil, wine, etc., by purchasing them first-hand; by this means they would get pure and wholesome wine for three or four sous the bottle, instead of paying twelve or fifteen for a weak and adulterated beverage. Every week the Association would

[1] This was abundantly proved during the making of the railroad at Rouen; those French labourers who, having no family, chose to adopt the English mode of living, were able to perform almost double their usual labour when comforted and invigorated by an abundant and nourishing diet.

[2] We have already observed that the price of wood, when purchased at retail, costs nearly twice the sum paid by such as can buy it in large quantities; the same rule holds good with all articles bought in small quantities, both the fractional parts of the weight and price being taken in favour of the seller.

provide a live ox, and as many sheep as necessary. The housewives would make the bread after the country fashion, so that, by following out this plan, and observing due order and economy, my men might have for twenty or twenty-five sous a day a good and abundant living.'"

"Ah, M. Agricola, now it is all explained!"

"Oh, but you have not heard all, mademoiselle; our calculating speculator would thus continue the argument: 'So far I have managed to lodge, warm, and feed my work-people at half what they individually could accomplish it. Now, then, let us see what is to be done as to clothing them equally advantageously. In all probability my plan as regards these former arrangements will ensure their perfect health, and health is the workman's stock in trade. The Association I propose to form will then be in a condition to purchase, still under my guarantee for the payment (which their wages secure to me), at wholesale prices, warm and substantial materials, good, useful linen, and different species of stuffs, which the wives of the married men can make up into garments as well as a tailor could do. Then, so large a consumption of hats, caps, shoes, boots, etc., being required, the Association might obtain them at a very considerable reduction of price by purchasing them, either by contract, or of the manufacturer at trade prices.' Now, then, Mlle. Angèle, what say you to our speculatist?"

"I can only say," replied the person addressed, with most charming simplicity, "that what you tell me is almost beyond belief, and yet so simple that a child can understand it."

"You are right, for nothing is more simple than all well-directed actions, nothing more beautiful, and yet men seem to overlook that. Observe, however, that hitherto our man of business has spoken only with a view to his own particular interest, only looking upon

the personal advantages that would accrue to himself, taking no account of the value of fraternity, the solidity, the support to be derived from such an association, not reflecting that a state of comfort softens and improves the nature and character of man, never recalling to his mind the imperative duty which dictates to the strong to aid and support the weak, forgetting this one great maxim, 'That every honest, industrious, and active man has a positive right to exact from society both employment and wages proportionate to the wants of his condition.' No, no, the speculatist we have been considering thinks only of the net profit; yet, you see, he has found the way, not only to invest his money to the very best advantage, but also to secure most important advantages to his work-people."

"Yes, indeed, M. Agricola, I see that quite plainly."

"Then what will you say, when I shall have proved to you that our speculator has also a great interest in giving his workmen, in addition to their wages, a certain proportion in the profit he himself derives?"

"Oh, but, M. Agricola, that would be much more difficult for you to explain or me to understand!"

"Then favour me by listening a few minutes, and I am sure you will be convinced it is so."

While thus conversing, Angèle and Agricola had nearly reached the gate of the garden belonging to the Maison Commune.

An elderly woman, dressed very neatly though plainly, approached Agricola and said:

"Has M. Hardy returned to the manufactory yet, sir?"

"No, madame; but we expect him every minute."

"Do you think he will be here to-day?"

"To-day or to-morrow, madame."

"I suppose, sir, you cannot tell me at what hour to-morrow he is likely to be here?'

"I scarcely believe any one knows that; but the

porter belonging to the manufactory, who is also M. Hardy's porter, may very likely be able to tell you."

"Thank you kindly, sir."

"Good day, madame."

"M. Agricola," said Angèle, when the woman whose appearance had broken into their conversation was quite out of sight, "did it not strike you that the poor woman who has just left us was very pale and agitated?"

"I observed it equally with yourself, mademoiselle, and I even fancied I observed her eyes filled with tears."

"She did, indeed, look as though she had been weeping bitterly, poor thing. I dare say she came to ask some favour of M. Hardy; but what is the matter with you, M. Agricola, you appear quite sad?"

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SECRET.

Agricola felt a vague presentiment that the visit of this elderly female, who looked so melancholy, might have some connection with the adventure of the young and pretty fair lady who, three days before, had come so disconsolate and wretched to make inquiries as to M. Hardy, and who had learned too late, perhaps, that she was watched and followed.

"Pardon me, mademoiselle," said Agricola to Angèle, "but the coming of this female reminded me of a circumstance of which, unfortunately, I cannot speak to you, as it is not my own secret."

"Oh, never mind, M. Agricola," replied the young girl, with a smile, "I am not inquisitive, and what you were telling me interests me so much that I have no wish to hear you speak of anything else."

"Well, then, mademoiselle, a few more words, and you will be as fully initiated into all the secrets of our Association as I am myself."

"I listen with pleasure, M. Agricola."

"Let us suppose, then, that some calculating speculator was talking; he would say: 'Here are my workmen in the best possible condition for working well, what is the next best step to take to obtain the largest profits? To make cheap — to sell dear. But there is no cheapness unless the raw material be purchased economically, unless the work itself be done in the best manner, and unless that work be done quickly. But, in spite of my

watchfulness, how can I prevent my workmen from wasting the raw material? How can I engage them, each in his particular department, to find out and use the most simple and least expensive method?'"

"True, M. Agricola, how is that to be done?"

"And that is not all; our man will say: 'In order to sell my produce very well they must be of the best, — irreproachable. My work-people do pretty well, that is not sufficient, they must produce masterpieces.'"

"But, M. Agricola, when their task is sufficiently well done, what interest have the workmen to overexert themselves in order to produce masterpieces?"

"That is the very phrase, Mlle. Angèle, what interest have they? Our speculator also says: 'My workmen must have an interest in economising the raw material, interest in employing their time fully, interest in discovering the best modes of production, interest, that what they produce shall be masterpieces. Then my aim is achieved. Well, let me interest my workmen in the profits which I derive from their economy, activity, zeal, and skill. The better they work, the better I shall sell; the better their share, the better also mine.'"

"Oh, now I understand, M. Agricola."

"And our speculator would speculate well. Before he was interested, the workman would say: 'Oh, it's of no consequence to me that I do more in the day or am better at the work; what do I gain by it? Nothing! Well, then, for a limited salary, limited duty. Now, on the contrary, I have an interest in exhibiting zeal and economy, and therefore the whole thing is changed. I redouble my activity, I stimulate that of others. If a comrade is idle and causes any injury to the factory, why, I have a right to say to him, "Brother, we are suffering more or less by your laziness or from the harm you are doing to our common interest."'"

"And, then, with what ardour, courage, and hope the work would be done, M. Agricola!"

"It is on that that our speculator has calculated, and he will say then: 'Treasures of experience and practical knowledge are often hidden in workshops for want of a good will, opportunity, or encouragement; excellent workmen, instead of putting out their skill, and making improvements as they can do so well, follow the old routine with indifference. How lamentable! For an intelligent man engaged all his life in some peculiar occupation must discover in progress of time a thousand modes of working better or faster. I will found, then, a sort of consulting committee to which I will nominate my principal overlookers and my best workmen; our interest is now common; and from this combination of practical intelligence much useful and new information must arise.' The speculator is not deceived, and soon struck by the incredible resources, the thousand and one new, ingenious, and perfect ideas, suddenly elicited by the workmen, 'You good-for-nothing fellows,' he exclaims, 'you knew all this and never told me! What has cost me these ten years a hundred francs to make has now only cost fifty francs besides an enormous saving of time.' 'Master,' replies a workman, who is as shrewd as his neighbour, 'what interest had I whether you saved fifty per cent. on an article or not? None! Now it is a different affair. You give me, besides my wages, a share in your profits; you elevate me in my own eyes by consulting my experience, my knowledge; instead of treating me as an inferior being, you take me into council; and now it is my interest, it is my duty, to tell you all I know, and to endeavour to learn more.' So you see, Mlle. Angèle, how the speculator would organise his workshops, so as to make his rivals ashamed of themselves, and envious of him. Now, if instead of this mere calculating speculator, we have a man who, joining to a knowledge of figures the tender and generous feelings of a noble heart and great elevation of mind, one who would expend his anxious

care, not only on the actual well doing, but the moral enlightenment of his workmen, seeking by every possible means to develop their understanding, elevate their hearts, and, strong in the authority with which his benevolence invests him, feeling deeply that he on whom depends the good or evil of three hundred human creatures should also look after their souls, should guide those whom he no longer calls his work-people, but his brothers, in the most straight and noble paths, should endeavour to excite in them a taste for learning, for all the arts which would render them happy and proud of a position which is but too often assumed by others with the tears of bitterness and of despair, — then, then, Mlle. Angèle, this man is — But, what do I see? He could not arrive more opportunely amongst us than whilst we were pronouncing a benediction. Here he is! It is M. Hardy!"

"Ah, Monsieur Agricola," said Angèle, drying her tears, "it is with hands clasped in gratitude that we ought to receive him."

"Look; see if that noble and benevolent face is not the image of his admirable heart!"

At this instant a travelling chariot, in which were M. Hardy and M. de Blessac, the unworthy friend who deceived him so infamously, entered the courtyard of the factory.

And now a few words in reference to the facts which we have endeavoured to narrate dramatically, and which are connected with the organisation of labour, — a question of paramount importance, and which will again occupy our attention before the end of this book.

In spite of the speeches, more or less official, of persons more or less serious (it seems to us as though this weighty epithet were somewhat abused), as to the increasing prosperity of the country, there is one fact beyond all dispute:

It is, that the working classes of society have never been more miserable, for wages have never been less adequate to the wants of those classes however moderate.

An indisputable proof of what we assert is found in the tendency, — and we cannot too highly praise that tendency, — which the rich classes are progressively making in order to aid and succour those who are suffering so much distress.

Charitable institutions, houses of refuge for poor children, philanthropic establishments, etc., prove sufficiently that the happy in this world foresee that, in spite of official assurances as to the state of general prosperity, terrible and threatening evils are fermenting in the depths of society.

How generous soever may be these isolated and individual attempts, they are and must be more than insufficient.

The persons in power can alone take the initiative effectually; but they carefully avoid it.

The serious people discuss seriously the importance of our diplomatic relations with Monomotapa, or some other matter equally serious; and they abandon to the chances of private commiseration, to the uncertainties of the good or bad inclination of capitalists and manufacturers, the fate more and more wretched of an immense, intelligent, and hard-working population, becoming hourly more and more enlightened as to their rights and their strength; and so depressed by the evils of a reckless rivalry, that they are often in want of the work which affords them at best but the scantiest means of existence!

Agreed, that the serious persons do not deign to think of these formidable miseries.

Statesmen smile with pity at the mere idea of attaching their names to an initiative, which would surround them with an overwhelming and delightful popularity.

Agreed, that all prefer to await the moment when the social question will burst like a clap of thunder.

Then, in the midst of this fearful commotion, which will shake the world, we shall see what will become of the serious questions and the serious men of our times.

To delay, or at least to drive back this awful future, we must then address ourselves to private sympathies in the name of happiness, of tranquillity, and the general safety.

We have said long since, if the rich but knew! Well, we repeat, to the honour of humanity, when the rich do know, they do good with intelligence and generosity.

Let us endeavour to prove to them, and to those, also, on whom depends the fate of an innumerable body of workmen, that they may be blessed and adored, without, indeed, loosening their purse-strings.

We have spoken of the Maison Commune, in which the workmen are lodged at such low rents, in salubrious and well-aired apartments.

This excellent institution was on the point of being realised in 1829, through the charitable intentions of Mlle. Amélie de Vitrolles.[1] At this time, in England, Lord Ashley is at the head of a company which has similar intentions, and offers to the shareholders a minimum of interest at 4*l.* per cent.

Why should not France follow such an example? An example which would have besides the advantage of giving to the poorer classes the first rudiments and the first means of association?

The immense advantages of living in common are manifest; they strike all minds; but the people themselves are not enabled to found establishments indispensable to these committees. What immense services, then, the rich would render by placing the working classes in a condition to enjoy these precious advantages! What consequence would it be to them to have built a house which would contain fifty sets of salubrious apartments, capable of containing families, provided the inter-

[1] See the *Démocratie Pacifique*, of the 19th October, 1844.

est of their money was assured? And it would be very easy to gurantee that.

Why does not the "Institut," which gives annually, as subjects of competition to young artists, plans of palaces, churches, theatres, etc., require the plan of a large establishment intended for the lodging of the working classes, who might there unite all the best advantages of economy and salubrity?

Why does not the Municipal Council of Paris, whose excellent intention and paternal anxiety for the suffering classes have been so often and so fully manifested, establish in the populous *arrondissemens* models of Maisons Communes, where they would try the first specimens of a life in common? The desire of being admitted into these establishments would be a powerful lever of emulation, morals, and also a comfort and hope for working people, and hope is something.

The city of Paris would thus make a good investment, do a good action, and, perhaps, by its example, the ruling powers might be induced to throw off their pitiless indifference.

Why, in fine, do not the capitalists who establish manufactories profit by that opportunity of uniting the Maisons Communes of the workmen to their mills or factories?

A very considerable advantage would accrue to the employers themselves in these times of desperate rivalry. In this way the reduction of salary is the more afflicting and unendurable for the workman, as he is deprived thereby of things of the first necessity; but if living alone, three francs are scarcely sufficient for his support, and the employer offers him the means of living with half that sum, thanks to this Association, the artisan's wages might, at the time of a commercial crisis, be reduced one-half without his feeling this diminution so severely; and it would be so much better than an entire stoppage of work and consequent cessation of wages.

We trust we have proved the advantage, utility, and facility of establishing Maisons Communes for workmen.

We have, then, established this:

That it would be not only of the strictest justice that the workman should participate in profits resulting from his labour and his intelligence, but that this just division would profit the master manufacturer himself.

We are not now putting forth hypotheses of projects easy to be realised, but are stating facts already accomplished.

One of our best friends, a very extensive manufacturer, whose heart is equal to his head, has established a consulting committee of work-people, and has allowed them (besides their wages) to enjoy a proportional share in the profits of his undertaking, and already have the results surpassed all hopes. In order to give to this excellent example every possible facility of execution, should any minds, at once sagacious and generous, desire to imitate him, we add at the end of this chapter the first regulations of this organisation.

We would only remark that the very primary rules of the establishment and other considerations have not at first allowed of all the work-people employed availing themselves of the profits so freely awarded to them, and which some day they will all enjoy.

We can affirm that, from the fourth meeting of this consulting committee, the worthy manufacturer, to whom we refer, had obtained such results from the appeal he made to the practical information of the workmen that he was enabled to calculate at once at thirty thousand francs (1,200*l.*) a year the profits which would result from the saving and improvement in the manufacture.

To sum up:

There is in every trade or calling three powers, three agents, three movers, whose rights should be equally respected:

The capitalist, who supplies the money.

The intelligent individual, who directs the working.

The workman, who produces the work.

Up to this time the workman has had but a very small portion, wholly inadequate to his wants. Would it not, therefore, be just, humane, to pay him better, and that directly or indirectly, either by facilitating the comfort which the Association offers, or by giving him a portion of the profit due to his labours?

Admitting, even at the worst, and after taking into consideration the ruinous effects of deadly rivalry, that this increase of salary would diminish, in some small degree, the profits of the employer and the director, would they not do, not only a generous and equitable thing, but even a profitable one, by placing their fortune and business out of the reach of all harm and injury, since they would have deprived the work-people of every legitimate excuse for disturbance, or of severe well-founded recriminations?

In a word, those persons appear to us always wise and prudent who insure their property against fire.

We have said that M. Hardy and M. de Blessac had arrived at the factory.

Shortly afterwards, from the Paris side, was seen advancing a humble hackney-coach, which drove towards the factory.

In this vehicle was Rodin.

The following are the main rules we have above referred to.

The regulation which treats of the functions of the committee is preceded by the following considerations as honourable for the master as the men:

"We are delighted to acknowledge that each supervisor, each overseer, and each workman contributes in his particular sphere of his labour to those qualities which are most conspicuous in the produce of our manu-

factures. They ought, therefore, to share in the profits they occasion, and continue to devote themselves to the progress which is still to be made. It is evident that a great benefit would result from the combination of the information and ideas of each. We have therefore formed the committee, whose comparative duties will be hereafter regulated.

"We have had for our object, in forming this institution, the increase by frequent exchange of ideas amongst the workmen, who, until now, have lived and worked almost entirely isolated the total of each one's knowledge, and to initiate them in the general principles of a wholesome and right administration. From this combination of the best strength of the workshop around the head of the establishment will arise the double profit of the intellectual and bodily amelioration of the workmen, and the increase of the prosperity of the manufacturer.

"Admitting, moreover, as just, that the exertion of each should be recompensed, we have resolved that, on the net profits of the house, all expenses and outgoings deducted, there shall be then deducted five per cent., which shall be divided in equal portions amongst the members of the committee (with the exception of the president, vice-president, and secretary), which shall be handed to them every year, on the thirty-first of December.

"This premium shall be increased one per cent. every time that the committee shall admit three fresh members.

"Morality, good conduct, skill, and various aptitudes for labour have determined our choice in selecting those workmen of whom we first form our committee. Granting these members the power of proposing the addition of fresh members, whose admission will be based on the same qualifications, and who will be elected by the committee itself, we would present to all the workmen of our

workshops an aim, which it will depend on themselves to attain, sooner or later.

"Their endeavours to fulfil all their duties by completing their work in the most perfect manner, and their behaviour out of working hours, will, in turns, open to them the door of the committee. They will also be entitled to enjoy a just and fair proportion in the advantages resulting from the success which our manufactures may obtain, — a success to which they will have contributed, and which cannot but increase through the good understanding and the fruitful rivalry which (we question not) will reign amongst the members of the committee."

Extract from the arrangements relative to the consulting committee, consisting of a president (supervisor of the establishment), a vice-president, a secretary, and fourteen members; four of whom are overseers, and ten workmen, of the most intelligent, in the various departments:

"Article 6. These members, when met, shall have the right to propose the addition of a new member, whose name shall be inscribed, in order that his admission be discussed at the following meeting. This admission shall be decided when, after ballot, the member proposed shall obtain two-thirds of the suffrages of the members assembled.

"Article 7. The committee shall, at its monthly sittings, occupy itself:

"1st. In finding the means to remedy the inconveniences which each day present themselves in manufacturing:

"2d. In proposing better and more economical means of establishing a fabric of goods, especially intended for exportation, and thus effectually, by the superiority of our make, to defeat foreign competition.

"3d. The means of arriving at the greatest degree

of economy in the use of materials, without injuring the strength and quality of the goods manufactured.

"4th. To propose and discuss propositions which shall be brought forward by the president, or other of the committee, looking especially to the improvements and perfection of the manufactures.

"5th. Finally, to place the price of the production in right equality with the real value of the goods produced."

We add, on our own part, that, according to the information which M. —— has kindly given us, the share of profit of each of his workmen (besides his regular wages) will be, at least, from three hundred to three hundred and fifty francs a year. We regret most poignantly that the modest feelings of M. —— do not allow us to reveal in these pages the name, as honourable as honoured, of the worthy individual who has set this admirable example.

CHAPTER XXII.

DISCLOSURES.

During the visit of Angèle and Agricola to the Maison Commune, the band of Loups, increasing in numbers as they advanced, by the addition of many idlers from the public-houses, had continued its progress towards the factory, whither also the hackney-coach which had brought Rodin from Paris was slowly advancing.

M. Hardy, descending from the carriage with his friend M. de Blessac, had entered the drawing-room of the house which he occupied close to the manufactory.

M. Hardy was of middle stature, elegantly and slightly made, and his appearance betokened a temperament essentially nervous and easily excited. His brow was high and expansive, his complexion pale, his eyes black, and equally expressive and penetrating, his physiognomy frank, intelligent, and attractive.

One word will paint the character of M. Hardy. His mother called him "the Sensitive Plant;" and, indeed, his was one of those exquisitely fine and delicate organisations, as expansive and affectionate as they were noble and generous, and so highly susceptible that, at the least harsh contact, they shrunk back and concentrated themselves in his breast.

When, united to this excessive sensibility, there existed a passionate love for the arts, a highly refined understanding, tastes essentially pure and unalloyed, we may imagine the thousand deceptions and frauds of which M. Hardy must have been the victim in his mercantile

career, and inquire how a heart so delicate and so tender had not been broken to pieces a thousand times in the incessant struggle against the most reckless and pitiless rivalries.

M. Hardy had, indeed, suffered severely. Compelled to follow a mercantile career, in order to continue honourably the affairs of his father, a model of rectitude and probity, whose affairs had been left somewhat in embarrassment owing to the events of 1815, he had acquired by his exertions and abilities one of the most highly honoured names in the mercantile world; but in order to achieve this end, what low cunning had he not to contend against, what perfidious rivalries to experience, what treacherous competition to encounter!

Excitable as he was, M. Hardy must have sunk a thousand times in his frequent experiences of painful indignation at baseness, of bitter disgust at dishonesty, but for the wise and firm support of his mother. On his return to her, after a day of painful struggle or hateful deception, he suddenly found himself transported into an atmosphere of purity so gracious, of serenity so entire, that he immediately lost the recollection of the tormenting things which had so deeply disgusted him during the day. The wounds of his mind were closed when he came into contact with the great and noble soul of his mother, and thus his love for her was little less than idolatry. When he lost her, he experienced one of those silent but deep shocks, like the griefs which never cease, and which, forming, as we may say, a part and parcel of our existence, have yet occasionally their days of melancholy sweetness.

A short time after this deep affliction, M. Hardy connected himself more closely with his workmen. He had always been just and kind to them, but although the void which his mother left in his heart must be ever unfilled, he felt a redoubled regard rise within him, experiencing the greater need to see around him happy

faces in proportion as he suffered; and then very soon the wonderful ameliorations which he applied for the physical and moral improvement of all around him served, not only as a relief, but as an occupation to his sorrow. Thus he gradually withdrew himself from the world, and concentrated his existence in three affections, — a tender and devoted friendship, which seemed to complete all his past friendships; a love as sincere and ardent as a last love; and a paternal attachment for his work-people.

His days passed, therefore, in the midst of the little world which he had filled with gratitude and respect for himself; a world which he had formed after his own views, in order to find therein a refuge from the painful realities which he so abhorred, and which comprised only good, intelligent, and happy beings, capable of responding to all the noble thoughts which had now become to him of greater and greater necessity.

Thus, after many sorrows, M. Hardy, arrived at the prime of life, possessing a sincere friend, a mistress worthy of his love, and knowing that he was assured of the deepest attachment of his work-people, had attained, at the moment of this recital, the utmost sum of felicity for which he could hope since his mother's decease.

M. de Blessac, the bosom friend of M. Hardy, had for a long time been worthy of his close and fraternal friendship and affection, but we have seen by what diabolical means the Père d'Aigrigny and Rodin had contrived to convert M. de Blessac (until then upright and sincere) into the tool of their dark machinations.

The two friends, who had suffered a little during their journey from the keenness of the north wind, were warming themselves before a good fire burning in the salon of M. Hardy.

"Oh, my dear Marcel, I am decidedly growing old," said M. Hardy, with a smile, as he addressed M. de

Blessac, "and I feel more than ever the want of home. To leave my usual occupations becomes decidedly painful, and I feel ill-disposed to everybody and everything that compels me to quit this happy corner of the earth."

"And when I remember," replied M. de Blessac, unable to keep down the slight colour that came to his cheek,—"when I remember, my friend, that it was for me that you undertook some time ago such a long journey!"

"Well, my dear Marcel, did you not in your turn come to accompany me in an excursion, which, without you, would have been as tiresome as it has been charming?"

"But, my dear friend, what a difference! I have contracted towards you a debt which I can never properly pay."

"Come, come, my dear Marcel, is there between us two any distinction of mine and thine? As regards feelings of attachment, is it not as delightful, as good, to give as to receive?"

"Noble heart! Noble heart!"

"Say happy heart. Oh, yes, happy in that affection for which its latest pulses must beat."

"And who should deserve happiness in this world, my dear friend, if it be not you?"

"To whom do I owe this happiness? To the affections which I have found here ready to sustain me, when, deprived of the support of my mother, who was my whole strength, I felt myself (I am ready to avow the weakness) almost incapable of supporting adversity."

"You, my friend, so firm, so determined in character, so resolute in doing good? You, whom I have seen struggling with as much energy as courage to carry out triumphantly an honest and just scheme?"

"True; but the more I advance in my career, the more do repulsive and disgusting things come before me, and call up my aversion, and the less do I feel my power of facing them."

"You would have courage enough, my dear friend, if any occasion presented itself."

"My dear Marcel," replied M. Hardy, with gentle and repressed emotion, "I have often told you my mother was my courage. When, my friend, I was with her, my heart torn by some black ingratitude, or revolted at some sordid cheatery, taking my two hands between her two venerable hands, she said to me, in sweet and serious voice, 'My dear child, it is rogues and villains who ought to be distressed; let us pity the wicked, let us publish the wickedness, but let us think only of the good.' Why, then, my friend, my heart, painfully smitten, expanded beneath the holy influence of this maternal advice, and every day I found in her presence the necessary strength to begin the next day that fierce struggle against the sad necessities of my condition. Fortunately God has willed it, that, after having lost this beloved mother, I have been able to attach to my existence those affections, without which, I confess, I should feel myself weak and unprotected, for you can scarcely believe, Marcel, the support, the strength I find in your friendship."

"Speak no more of me, my friend," continued De Blessac, hiding his own embarrassment. "Let us talk of another affection, almost as gentle and as tender as that of a mother."

"I understand you, my good Marcel," replied M. Hardy. "I have concealed nothing from you; because, in a most serious matter, I have had recourse to the counsels of your friendship. Yes, I think that every day of my life my adoration for that dear woman increases. She is the only one I have ever passionately loved, the only one whom now I shall ever love. And then, too, if I must tell all, my mother, ignorant of how dear Marguerite was to me, so often praised her, that her eulogy renders that love almost sacred in my eyes."

"And then, there are such strange coincidences between the character of Madame de Noisy and your

own, my friend, — her idolatry for her mother particularly!"

"True, Marcel; and this characteristic of Marguerite has often been to me a source of equal admiration and torment. How often has she said to me with her usual frankness, 'I have sacrificed all for you; but I would sacrifice you for my mother.'"

"*Dieu merci*, my friend, you can never fear that you will see Madame de Noisy exposed to that cruel struggle! Her mother has long since given up the idea, as you tell me, of returning to America, where M. de Noisy, who is perfectly careless about his wife, appears fixed for ever. Thanks to the discretion and devotion of the worthy woman who brought Marguerite up, your love is buried in the deepest mystery. What is there that could now trouble it?"

"Nothing, oh, nothing!" exclaimed M. Hardy. "I have even all but guarantees for its duration."

"What do you mean, my friend?"

"I do not know that I ought to tell even you."

"Am I indiscreet, my friend?"

"You, my dear Marcel? I never fancied so for a moment," said M. Hardy, in a friendly, but reproachful tone; "no, but I do not like to tell you of my happiness until it is complete; and there is still wanting something to complete the certainty of a particular project."

A servant entered at this moment, who said to M. Hardy:

"Sir, there is an old gentleman who desires to see you on very pressing business."

"Already!" said M. Hardy, with slight impatience. "Will you allow me, my friend?"

M. de Blessac rose to withdraw into another room; but M. Hardy stopped him, smiling, and saying, "No, no, remain. Your presence will hasten the interview."

"But if it be on business, my friend?"

"I transact that always openly, as you are aware." Then, turning to the servant:

"Desire the gentleman to come in."

"The postilion wishes to know if he may go," said the servant.

"Certainly not. He will have to take M. de Blessac to Paris; so let him wait."

The servant left the room, and returned immediately with Rodin, whom De Blessac did not know, as his own treachery had been arranged by another agent.

"M. Hardy?" said Rodin, bowing respectfully, and looking first at one and then at the other of the two friends.

"I am he, sir, at your service," replied the manufacturer, in a bland tone; for, at the sight of this old, humble, and meanly clad person, he thought he had come to ask for assistance.

"You, sir, François Hardy?" repeated Rodin, as if he wished to make quite sure of the identity of the person.

"I have already had the honour to inform you, sir, that I am he."

"I have a private communication to make to you, sir," said Rodin.

"You may speak out, sir; this gentleman is my friend," said M. Hardy, looking towards M. de Blessac.

"But it is to you, only, that I wish to speak, sir," replied Rodin.

M. de Blessac was about to retire, when M. Hardy retained him by a glance, saying kindly to Rodin, fearing that the presence of a third person might annoy him if he was about to ask for alms:

"Sir, allow me to ask if it is for you or myself that you require a secret interview?"

"For you, sir, — for you and you only," replied Rodin.

"Then, sir," replied M. Hardy, in extreme astonish-

ment, "you may speak out. I have no secrets from this gentleman."

After a momentary silence Rodin, addressing himself to M. Hardy, resumed the subject, saying:

"For you, sir, whom I know to be deserving of the universal esteem in which you are justly held, you have a claim upon the sympathy of every honest heart."

"I am glad you think so, sir."

"I do; and to prove my sincerity, I come as an honest, straightforward man, to render you a service."

"And may I inquire the nature of this service, sir?"

"It is to expose a vile and disgraceful deception practised on you, and by which you have been treacherously betrayed."

"You must be mistaken, sir!"

"Not at all. I have undeniable proofs of what I advance."

"Let me have these proofs."

"I tell you, sir, I have written evidence of the perfidy I come to unmask; in a word, you have been most basely deceived by a man you called your dearest friend!"

"And his name?"

"M. Marcel de Blessac!" replied Rodin.

The person thus alluded to started at these words as though a thunderbolt had fallen at his feet. A livid paleness overspread his features, and with difficulty he managed to stammer out, "Sir!"

Without even looking at his friend, or perceiving his excessive agitation and alarm, M. Hardy caught him by the hand, exclaiming in a tone of affectionate warmth:

"Silence, my dear friend!" Then, with indignation sparkling in his eyes, he cried to Rodin, whom he continued to gaze on with supreme contempt:

"So, then, it is M. de Blessac whom you accuse?"

"It is," answered Rodin, firmly.

"Do you know him?"

"I never saw him in my life!"

"Then how dare you presume to utter his name? And of what is it you dare to accuse him, — of betraying my friendship?"

"Two words, if you please, sir," said Rodin, with an agitation he appeared vainly striving to repress. "Supposing that one honourable man saw another equally honourable about to be murdered by a villain, would he be doing right or wrong in calling out for assistance, and giving the scoundrel into custody?"

"Of course he would, sir; but what connection can this case possibly have with — "

"In my opinion, sir, there are certain acts of treachery every bit as criminal as murder itself; and with those sentiments I am here to interpose between the executioner and his victim."

"Executioner! Victim!" exclaimed M. Hardy, more and more bewildered and surprised. "What words are these?"

"I presume you are well acquainted with the handwriting of M. de Blessac," said Rodin.

"I am, sir."

"Then, read this," said Rodin, taking from his pocket a letter, which he presented to M. Hardy, who, for the first time casting his eyes towards his friend, was petrified at beholding the mortal paleness of his countenance; in truth, M. de Blessac possessed not the daring effrontery requisite for such as engage in treacherous proceedings, and felt all the speechless agony of one who felt that the hour of exposure was at hand.

"Marcel!" exclaimed M. Hardy, in great alarm and perturbation at this unexpected sight. "Marcel! for heaven's sake, what means your silence — your paleness?"

"Marcel!" exclaimed Rodin, feigning the most painful astonishment. "Is it possible this gentleman can be M. de Blessac? Oh, if I had but known that!"

"Do you not hear what this man says, Marcel?" cried M. Hardy, seizing the hand of M. de Blessac; "he asserts that you have shamefully deceived and wronged me!"

But the hand he grasped was cold and clammy as that of a corpse.

"God of heaven!" continued M. Hardy, shrinking back with a horrible dread of he scarcely knew what; "he speaks not — he attempts not to reply!"

"Since I find myself in the presence of M. de Blessac," said Rodin, "I find myself obliged to ask him if he can venture to deny having addressed several letters to the Rue Milieu-des-Ursins in Paris, under cover to M. Rodin."

M. de Blessac still preserved silence.

Unwilling to credit either his eyes or his ears, M. Hardy convulsively tore open the letter given him by Rodin, and hastily perused a few lines, occasionally breaking out into exclamations abundantly expressive of the deep anguish he endured. He had no need to complete the reading of the whole epistle, to receive the most perfect conviction of the black treachery of M. de Blessac. Overpowered by the incontrovertible evidence of the letter, and staggering beneath the dreadful certainty it afforded of the infamous deception and perfidious conduct practised towards him by one he had so loved and trusted, the brain of M. Hardy seemed almost to give way under so fearful a blow. His senses seemed forsaking him, and his very blood seemed curdling around his heart as he glanced at the abyss of shame and misery dug by the friend he would have defended with his life. The dreadful letter fell from his trembling hands; but to this first shock succeeded a paroxysm of rage, indignation, and contempt, and seizing M. de Blessac with one hand, he exclaimed, while raising the other in a threatening attitude, "Villain!" Then suddenly arresting the intended blow, he said, with terrifying calmness, "No, I should disgrace my hand were I to allow it to touch

you!" then added, turning towards Rodin, who was hastily advancing to interpose, "'Tis not in buffeting the cheek of a cowardly traitor I should employ myself, but in warmly and cordially grasping yours, my good sir, who have had the courage to unmask a traitor and a coward!"

"Sir!" cried M. de Blessac, sinking with shame, "I am at your disposal — I wait your commands — and —"

He stopped, utterly unable to utter another syllable. A noise of persons speaking resounded from without the door, which opened violently, and an aged female rushed in, spite of all the efforts made by a servant to prevent her, saying, in an agitated tone, "I tell you I must speak to your master this very minute!" At the sound of the voice and the appearance of the pale, trembling, and distressed woman who stood before him, M. Hardy forgot alike M. de Blessac, Rodin, and the treachery practised upon himself. Starting with alarm and surprise, he exclaimed:

"Madame Dupau, what has occurred? What brings you here?"

"Alas, monsieur, a great — a heavy misfortune!"

"Marguerite?" exclaimed M. Hardy, in heartrending tones.

"She has gone, sir."

"Gone!" repeated M. Hardy, as struck with terror as though the ground had opened beneath his feet.

"Marguerite gone?" cried he.

"All is discovered, and three days ago she was taken away by her mother," said the unhappy woman, in faltering tones.

"Gone! Marguerite gone!" persisted M. Hardy. "Oh, it is not — it cannot be true! You are deceiving me!" And, without waiting for one word of explanation, he rushed, bewildered and distracted, out of the house, hastened to the courtyard, where his carriage, to which post-horses had been attached, was waiting for M. de

Blessac, and springing up into it, said to the postilion, "To Paris with all the speed you can!"

At the moment when the vehicle was proceeding with the rapidity of lightning along the road to Paris, the strong wind which prevailed brought the distant noise made by the Loups, as they loudly chanted forth their war-song, while hurrying onwards to attack the manufactory.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE ATTACK.

When M. Hardy had left the factory, Rodin, who had not anticipated this abrupt departure, was going slowly towards his coach, when suddenly he paused for a moment, starting with joy and surprise at seeing at some distance from him the Marshal Simon and his father going towards one of the wings of the Maison Commune, for a circumstance had delayed, until this moment, the conversation of the father and son.

"Good!" said Rodin; "very good — better and better; and now if my man has but found out and decided the little Rose-Pompon!"

At this instant, the wind, which was rising, brought to the Jesuit's ear the nearer sound of the war-song of the Loups.

After having listened a moment very attentively to this distant noise, with his foot on the step of the carriage, Rodin said, as he seated himself in the vehicle:

"The worthy Joshua Van Daël of Java little thinks, at this moment, that his bills on the Baron Tripeaud are in a fair way to become valuable."

And then the hackney-coach went towards the barrier.

Several workmen, who were on the point of starting for Paris to convey the reply of their comrades to certain propositions relative to secret societies, had been under the necessity of having a private conversation with the

father of Marshal Simon, and hence the delay in his conversation with his son.

The old workman, the foreman of the factory, occupied two very nice rooms on the ground floor, at the extremity of one of the wings of the Maison Commune; a small garden of about sixty feet square, which he amused himself by cultivating, was close under his windows. The glass door which led to this flower bed was open, and allowed the sunbeams, which were warm for the month of March, to penetrate the simple apartment, into which the artisan in his blouse, and the Marshal of France in his full uniform, now entered. Then the marshal, taking his father's hands in his own, said to him, in a voice so sad that the old man started at it:

"Father, I am very unhappy," and a painful expression, until then repressed, suddenly darkened the noble features of the marshal.

"You unhappy?" exclaimed the elder Simon, with uneasiness, and going close towards him.

"I will tell you all, my father," replied the marshal, in a tremulous voice; "for I require the counsel of your inflexible integrity."

"With respect to honour and loyalty, you have no occasion to ask counsel of any one."

"Yes, my father, you only can draw me from an uncertainty which is most agonising torture to me."

"Explain yourself, and quickly, I entreat."

"For some days my daughters have appeared under some constraint — dejected. During the first moments of our meeting, they were wild with joy and happiness; all at once that has changed, and they are each day more and more sad. Yesterday I surprised a tear in their eyes, and when, filled with emotion, I clasped them to my heart, entreating them to tell me their grief, they made no reply, but threw their arms around my neck and bedewed my cheeks with tears."

"That is very strange. To what can you attribute this change?"

"Sometimes I fear that I have not sufficiently concealed from them my sorrow at their mother's death; and the dear angels, perhaps, mourn because they see themselves insufficient for my happiness. Yet, strange to say, they seem not only to understand, but to share my sorrow. Yesterday Blanche said to me, 'How happy we should all be again if our mother was with us!'"

"They share your grief and do not reproach you for it. The cause of their melancholy has another source."

"So I say, father, but what can it be? My imagination is exhausted in trying to find it out. What shall I say? Sometimes I go so far as to imagine that some fell demon has glided in between me and my children. The idea is stupid, absurd, I know; but when sound reason is at fault, we sometimes give ourselves up to the wildest suppositions."

"Who could desire to come between you and your children?"

"No one — that I know well enough."

"Come, come, Pierre," said the old workman, paternally; "wait — have patience — watch and scrutinise these poor young hearts with that solicitude which you feel, and I will answer for it you will discover some secret, no doubt, very innocent."

"Yes," said the marshal, looking steadfastly at his father; "yes, but to penetrate this secret, I ought never to quit them."

"Why do you quit them?" inquired the old man, surprised at the mournful air of his son. "Are you not now to be always with them — with me?"

"Who knows?" replied the marshal, with a sigh.

"What do you mean?"

"Why in the first place, father, you know all the duties that keep me here. You know, too, those which

may remove me from you, from my daughters, and my other child."

"What child?"

"The son of my old friend, the Indian prince."

"Djalma? Has anything happened to him?"

"Father, he alarms me."

"He?"

At this moment a loud noise, brought up by a violent gust of wind, was heard in the distance; the uproar was so great that the marshal paused a moment, then added:

"What can that be?"

After having for an instant listened to the deadened sounds, which became weaker and passed away with the wind, the old man said:

"Some noisy, tipsy singers from the Barriers, who are roving about."

"The sounds appeared to come from a large body of persons," replied the marshal.

He and his father again listened, but the noise had ceased.

"You were saying," resumed the old workman, "that this young Indian alarmed you. In what way?"

"I have told you, father, of his mad and unhappy passion for Mlle. de Cardoville."

"And does that frighten you, my son?" asked the old man, looking at him with surprise. "Djalma is only eighteen years of age, and at his time of life one passion drives out the other."

"If it were a mere commonplace love, father, you would say truly; but reflect, to the most dazzling beauty Mlle. de Cardoville, as you know, unites the most noble, most generous disposition; and by a series of fatal circumstances—oh, yes, most fatal—Djalma has had an opportunity of appreciating the rare value of this elevated soul."

"You are right; and this is more serious than I thought it was."

"You have no idea of the ravages which this passion

has made on this ardent and untamable child. Sometimes to his painful depression there succeeds the excitement of the most savage ferocity. Yesterday I surprised him suddenly; with bloodshot eye, his features spasmodic with rage, and giving way to the gusts of a wild frenzy, he was stabbing, with his poniard, a red cloth cushion, exclaiming, in a breathless voice, 'Oh, blood — I have his blood!' 'In Heaven's name!' I exclaimed, 'what means this madness?' 'I am killing the man,' he replied, in a gloomy voice and with a wild air. He meant some rival whom he thought he had."

"There is really something terrible in such a passion, in such a heart," said the old man.

"At other times," continued the marshal, "he directs his rage against Mlle. de Cardoville, and then at others, against himself. I have been obliged to remove all his arms, for a man who came from Java, with him and who appears much attached to him, told me that he suspected that he had some thoughts of suicide."

"Unhappy boy!"

"Well, my father," said Maréchal Simon, with deep bitterness, "it is at the moment when my daughters and this child of my adoption demand all my care that I am, perhaps, on the eve of forsaking them."

"Forsaking them?"

"Yes, to satisfy a duty which is even more sacred than those imposed on us by friendship or ties of blood," said the marshal, with an accent so grave and solemn that his father, full of emotion, exclaimed:

"What duty is it?"

"Father," said the marshal, after remaining pensive for a moment, "Who made me what I am? Who gave me the title of duke, the bâton of marshal?"

"Napoleon!"

"For you, a stern republican, I know he lost all his prestige, when, from the first citizen of a republic, he became emperor."

"I lamented the weakness," sighed old Simon, "that converted a demigod into a man."

"But for me, father, for me, a soldier, who have fought constantly by his side, under his eyes; for me, whom he raised from the lowest ranks of the army to the highest; for me, whom he overwhelmed with kindness and affection, he was ever more than a hero. He has been a friend; and there was as much gratitude as admiration in my idolatry of him. Exiled, I would have shared his exile; but the favour was refused me! Then I conspired and drew my sword against those who had despoiled his son of the crown which France had given him."

"And in your position you did rightly, Pierre; for, without sharing your admiration, I understand your gratitude, projects of exile, conspiracy. I have approved of all, as you well know."

"Well, this disinherited son, in whose name I have conspired, is seventeen years of age, and now able to wield his father's sword."

"Napoleon II.!" exclaimed the old man, looking at his son with extreme surprise and anxiety. "The King of Rome!"

"King! No, he is no longer King Napoleon, — no, he is no longer called Napoleon, they have given him some Austrian name; for they were afraid of his other name — everything makes them afraid; and so, do you know what they are doing with the emperor's son?" inquired the marshal, with painful excitement. "They are torturing him, — killing him by inches!"

"Who told you this?"

"Oh, one who knows, and who has said the truth — the dreadful truth. Yes, the emperor's son is struggling with all his might against a premature death; his eyes are turned towards France; he waits — waits, and no one goes to him — no one; not one amongst all the men whom his father has made as great as they were

once small; not one — not one thinks of the consecrated child whom they are choking, and who is dying."

"And you — you think — "

"Yes; but to think of it, it was necessary that I should know. Yes, not to have a doubt on the point. And it was not from the same source that I gathered my information, that I might accurately learn the cruel fate of this boy, to whom I have taken an oath; for one day, as I told you, the emperor, the proud and fond parent, pointing to him in his cradle, said to me, 'My old friend, you will be to the son as you have been to the father! for those who love us love our France also.'"

"Yes, I know it. You have often repeated those words to me; and, like yourself, I have been moved by them."

"Well, father, if, learning as I have done, how the son of the emperor suffers, — I have seen, seen to a certainty, the most convincing proofs that I am not deceived, — if I have seen a letter from a high personage, at the court of Vienna, who offers to a man faithful to the worship of the emperor the means of entering into communication with the King of Rome, and, perhaps, of rescuing him from his executioners — "

"And then," said the artisan, looking steadfastly at his son, "when once Napoleon II. is free?"

"Then!" exclaimed the marshal; and then dropping his voice, he added: "Why, father, do you think that France is insensible to the humiliation she endures? Do you believe the remembrance of the emperor is worn out? No, no; it is in these days of abasement for our country that his sacred name is silently invoked. What would it be, then, if this glorious name again appeared on the frontier, revived in his son? Do you not believe that the heart of all France would beat for him?"

"This is a conspiracy against the existing government, with Napoleon II. as the war-cry," replied the old man. "It is a serious matter."

"Father, I told you that I was very unhappy; well, am I not?" cried the marshal. "Not only do I ask myself if I ought to abandon my children and you, to throw myself into all the hazards of so daring an enterprise; but I ask myself, whether I am not pledged to the existing government, which, in recognising my title and my rank, has not favoured me, but only rendered me tardy justice. What ought I to do? To abandon all I love dearest, or remain insensible to the tortures of the emperor, — that emperor to whom I am everything, to whom, personally, I have sworn fidelity both to himself and his child? Ought I to lose this only occasion of, perhaps, saving him? Or ought I not to conspire for him? Tell me if I exaggerate what is due to the memory of the emperor. Speak, my father, — decide. During the whole sleepless night I have endeavoured to single out of this chaos the right line prescribed by honour; and yet I have gone from one indecision to another. You only, my father, I repeat it, you alone can guide me."

After remaining for a few instants lost in reflection, the old man was about to reply to his son, when some person, after having run across the small garden, opened the door on the ground floor, and entered with great consternation into the room in which Marshal Simon and his father were.

It was Olivier, the young workman who had escaped from the public-house in the village, where the Loups had assembled.

"M. Simon! M. Simon!" he exclaimed, pale and breathless. "They are here! They are come! They are going to attack the factory!"

"Who?" cried the old man, rising quickly.

"The Loups, some quarrymen and stone-masons, and a crowd of idlers and vagabonds, who have joined them on their way. Hark, don't you hear them? They are calling out 'Death to the Dévorans!'"

In fact the noises grew nigher and nigher.

"It was their noise I heard just now," said the marshal, also rising from his chair.

"There are more than two hundred, M. Simon," said Olivier. "They are armed with stones and clubs; and, unfortunately, the greater part of the workmen of the factory are in Paris. There are not forty of us left; the women and children have run to their apartments shrieking with affright. Don't you hear them?"

And the ceiling resounded beneath the hasty footsteps.

"Will they really make the attack in earnest?" said the marshal to his father, who grew more and more uneasy.

"I have no doubt of it," replied the old man. "There is nothing more fierce than these quarrels of companionship; and, moreover, for some time past, every mode has been employed to excite the people of the vicinity against the factory."

"If you are so inferior in numbers," said the marshal, "we must first barricade all the doors, and then —"

He could not finish. A loud burst of savage cries made the very glasses in the window-frames shake, and so near and so astounding that the marshal, his father, and the young workman went out instantly into the garden, bounded on one side by a tolerably high wall, which was bounded by the fields.

Suddenly, and then the violence, the shoutings, and uproar redoubled, a shower of stones and numerous flints, intended to break the windows of the house, smashed in several panes on the first floor, and, glancing back on the wall, fell in the garden, where the marshal and his father were standing.

Singular fatality! The old man was struck on the head by a large stone, and staggered, then, stooping forward, fell all bleeding into the arms of Marshal Simon, at the same moment that there resounded without, with increasing fury, the fierce cries of "Battle and death to the Dévorans!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE LOUPS AND THE DÉVORANS.

It was a fearful thing to see this unrestrained mob whose first hostilities had been so disastrous to Marshal Simon's father.

One wing of the Maison Commune, where the garden wall ended on that side, looked on to the open fields; and it was here that the Loups had begun their attack.

The haste of the march, the halts which the troop had made at two public-houses on the way, the burning impatience of the struggle which was imminent, had more and more urged these men to fierce excitement.

The first volley of stones having been thrown, the majority of the assailants looked for fresh weapons on the ground; some, to pick up their supplies with greater ease, held there sticks between their teeth, others had put them against the wall; and here and there several groups clustered tumultuously around the ringleaders of the party. The best clothed of these men wore blouses, or smock-frocks, with caps, some were covered only with rags; for, as we have already narrated, a considerable number of the idlers of the Barriers, and vagabonds of all descriptions, with hang-dog countenances, had joined the troop of Wolves from idleness or curiosity. Several hideous women, clad in squalid tatters, who seemed to start up suddenly to accompany this villainous mob, associated with them, and, by their shrieks and language, still more inflamed their excited minds. One of these, tall, stout, with purple complexion, drunken eyes,

and toothless gums, had a handkerchief bound around her head, from beneath which her yellow and dishevelled hair escaped in tangled masses. She had a ragged gown, and a brown check shawl crossed over her breast and tied in a knot behind her back. This hag seemed greatly enraged. She had tucked up her torn sleeves; in one hand she brandished a thick club, and in the other she held a large stone. Her companions called her *Ciboule* (Onion).

This horrible wretch exclaimed, in a hoarse voice:

"How I long to bite the women of this factory! I'll bleed 'em!"

These savage words were received with loud applause by her companions, and with brutal shouts of "*Vive Ciboule!*" which excited her still more madly.

Amongst the other ringleaders was a little thin man, pale and weasel-faced, having his black beard all around his chin and throat. He wore a scarlet Greek cap; and his long new blouse covered a very well-made pair of cloth trousers, and boots of best quality. This man was evidently of a different class in life to the others of the mob; and it was he who particularly took the lead in charging the workmen of the factory with behaving ill to, and speaking ill of, the inhabitants of the environs,—he shouted loudly, but had neither stick nor stone. A stout man, with very red face, and whose bass voice seemed as if it belonged to a chorister, said to him:

"What, then you will not fire on these impious hounds, whose sins may draw down the cholera on the country, as monsieur the curé says!"

"I will fire better than you," replied the weasel-faced man, with a peculiar and sinister smile.

"And what will you fire with?"

"Perhaps with this stone," replied the little man, plucking up a large flint; but as he stooped, a bag, nearly filled, but very light, which appeared to have been fastened under his blouse, fell to the ground.

"Mind, you'll lose your bag and your marbles," said the other, "though it does not seem very heavy."

"They are samples of wool," replied the weasel-faced man, plucking up the bag with much haste, and concealing it as quickly as possible under his blouse; then he added, "But attention, for I think the quarrier is going to speak."

The individual who exercised the most complete ascendancy over this excited assemblage was this fierce quarrier. His gigantic height so completely elevated him above the multitude that they could always see his enormous head enveloped in a ragged red handkerchief; his herculean shoulders, covered with a yellow goatskin, elevated above the rest of this malevolent and swarming crowd, which was interspersed here and there with women's caps, like so many white points.

Seeing to what a pitch of exasperation the multitude had reached, the small number of honest but mistaken workmen, who had been dragged into the dangerous enterprise, under a pretence of a companionship quarrel, dreading the consequences of the struggle, endeavoured, but too late, to leave the party; but environed and huddled together in the midst of the most hostile of the group, fearing to be branded as cowards, or to be attacked by the majority of the party they had joined, were awaiting the most favourable opportunity to effect their escape.

A profound silence succeeded the savage shouts which had accompanied the first volley of stones, which was broken by the stentorian voice of the quarrier.

"The Wolves have howled," he exclaimed; "we will wait a moment and see if the Dévorans will reply and give battle."

"We must get them all out of the factory, and try and make them fight on neutral ground," said the little weasel-faced man, who appeared to be the "standing counsel" of the band, "or else it will be a violation of domicile."

"Violation! What do we care for violation?" cried the horrible hag called Ciboule; "either inside or outside, I will tear out some of the eyes of those polecats in the factory."

"Yes, yes," shouted the other hideous beldams, as ragged and raving as Ciboule, "yes, you men are not to have it all to yourselves."

"We will have our share!"

"The women of the factory say that all the women of the neighbourhood are drunkards and —" exclaimed the little weasel-faced man.

"We'll pay 'em off for that!"

"We women must have our share in the battle!"

"This is our affair!"

"As they have singers in their Maison Commune," shouted Ciboule, "we'll teach them the air of '*au secours, on m'assassine*' (help, I am being murdered!)"

This brutal jest was hailed with cries, bravos, and tremendous stamping of feet, to which the stentor voice of the quarrier put an end by shouting, "Silence!"

"Silence — silence!" echoed the crowd. "Hark to the quarrier!"

"If the Dévorans are such curs as not to dare to venture out after the second volley of stones, there is a door I see there, — we will break in by that, and trace them to their holes."

"It would be better to draw them out to fight, so that not one of them remain in the interior of the factory," said the little weasel-faced man, who evidently had some design in what he suggested.

"Oh, let's fight where we can!" exclaimed the quarrier, with a voice of thunder; "so that we can get them to 'the scratch,' — that's all! We can fight on the edge of a wall or the roof of a house, can't we, Wolves?"

"Yes, yes!" said the mob, excited by the quarrier's savage air; "if they won't come out, we'll force our way in."

"We'll see the inside of their palace!"

"These pagans haven't even a chapel," said the bass voice; "M. le Curé has damned them all."

"Why should they live in a palace, and we in dog-holes?"

"Why, Hardy's work-people say that dog-holes are too good for such scum of the earth as you," cried the little man with the weasel-face.

"Yes, yes, they did say so!"

"Then we'll smash everything before us!"

"We'll demolish their fine bazar!"

"We'll turn their house out of windows!"

"And when we have made the —— sing one of their squalling ditties," screamed Ciboule, "we will teach them how to dance with stones on their heads."

"Now then, my Loups, attention!" cried the quarrier, in his stentorian voice, "one volley more, and if the Dévorans will not leave their holes, then down with the door."

This proposition was received with the most fierce uproar, and the quarrier, whose voice was heard above the tumult, exclaimed at the top of his powerful lungs:

"Now, then, Wolves, attention! Stones in hand, and together! Are you ready?"

"All ready!"

"Then fire!"

And, for the second time, a cloud of stones and heavy flints was dashed furiously against the façade of the Maison Commune, which looked into the fields. Some of those projectiles broke the window-panes which had escaped the first attack; and to the sharp sound of the smashed windows were added fierce shouts, all uttered simultaneously and like a threatening chorus, by this crowd, drunken by its own excess.

"Battle and death to the Dévorans!"

But these cries became literally frantic when, through the broken windows, the assailants saw women, who

were passing and repassing, running backwards and forwards, full of alarm, some carrying children, others tossing their arms in the air and calling for help, whilst some, more bold, opened the windows and stooped out, in order to try and close the exterior shutters.

"Are these not the ants moving?" shouted Ciboule, stooping to pick up a stone; "we will help them to a few flints!"

And the stone flung by the masculine and practised hand of the beldam struck an unlucky woman who, leaning out of the window, was trying to draw the shutter towards her.

"A hit! I have touched the bull's-eye!" exclaimed the hideous creature.

"Well aimed — well hit, Ciboule!" cried a voice.

"Ciboule for ever!"

"Come out, you Dévorans, if you dare!"

"You have said a hundred times that the people of the neighbourhood were too great cowards even to come and look at your house," said the little weasel-faced man.

"They're making up their minds!"

"If they won't come out," shouted the quarrier, in a voice of thunder, "we'll smoke 'em out!"

"Yes, so we will!"

"Let us drive in the door!"

"We must find 'em!"

"Come on — come on!"

And the crowd, headed by the quarrier, who was closely followed by Ciboule, brandishing a stick, marched forward with a loud uproar, towards a large door which was at a short distance.

The resounding earth seemed to tremble beneath the hasty trampling of the mob, which was then silent; and this confused and, as it were, subterranean noise seemed even more threatening than the loud shouting.

The Loups soon reached the door, which was of massive oak.

At the moment when the quarrier raised his heavy stone-cutter's hammer to strike against one of the folding doors, it suddenly opened.

Some of the more resolute of the assailants were about to rush in by this entrance, but the quarrier retreated, extending his arms as if to moderate their ardour, and silence his party, who then grouped and collected themselves around him.

The half opened door revealed a body of workmen (unfortunately but very few), whose countenances bespoke resolution. They were hastily armed with pitchforks, iron tongs, and sticks. Agricola, at their head, held in his hand his heavy smith's hammer.

The young workman was very pale, but it was easy to see by the sparkle of his eyes, his bold air, and his determined demeanour that his father's blood was boiling in his veins, and that, in such a struggle, he would become a terrible antagonist. Yet he restrained himself and said to the quarrier in a firm voice:

"What do you want?"

"Battle!" shouted the quarrier, with a voice of thunder.

"Yes, yes! — battle!" echoed the crowd.

"Silence, my Wolves!" cried the quarrier, turning around, and spreading his large hand towards the multitude.

Then addressing Agricola:

"The Wolves demand battle."

"With whom?"

"With the Dévorans."

"There are no Dévorans here," replied Agricola, — "there are none but peaceable workmen, so retire!"

"Well, then, the Wolves will eat the peaceable workmen."

"The Wolves will not eat any one," said Agricola, looking full in the face at the quarrier, who approached him with a threatening aspect; "and the Wolves will make none afraid but little children."

"Oh, you think so?" said the quarrier, with a ferocious grin.

Then uplifting his heavy stone-cutter's hammer, he put it close to Agricola's nose, saying:

"Is this a thing to laugh at?"

"And this?" said Agricola, who, by a rapid motion, met and vigorously repulsed the stone-cutter's hammer with his smith's hammer.

"Iron against iron — hammer against hammer! I like that," said the quarrier.

"We do not know or care for what you like," replied Agricola, hardly containing himself; "you have broken our windows, frightened our women, and wounded, perhaps, killed, the oldest workman in the factory, who is at this moment in his son's arms," and Agricola's voice quivered in spite of himself; "that is enough, I should think."

"No; the Wolves are more hungry than that," replied the quarrier; "you must come out from where you are, you set of curs, into the open field, and give us battle."

"Yes, battle! Make them come out! Battle, battle!" shouted the mob, groaning, whistling, shaking their sticks, and closing up, so as to narrow still more the small space which separated them from the door.

"We do not want any fighting," replied Agricola, "and we shall not leave this place; but, if you are foolhardy enough, pass this;" and Agricola threw his cap on the threshold, and put his foot on it with an intrepid air. "Yes; if you pass this, then you will attack us in our home, and you will be responsible for all that happens."

"In your home or elsewhere, we will fight it out. The Wolves will eat the Dévorans; and so now for your attack," said the savage quarrier, raising his hammer against Agricola.

But the latter, moving aside by a rapid motion of his body, avoided the blow, and dashed his hammer at the breast of the quarrier, who was driven back a step or two, but, recovering his balance, rushed furiously at Agricola, shouting, "Forward, my Wolves!"

CHAPTER XXV.

THE RETURN.

The contest between Agricola and the quarryman was the signal for a general *mêlée* of the most determined and sanguinary kind. A dense mass of the assailants, following closely in the quarrier's wake, pressed towards this point of attack with irresistible fury; while a considerable portion of the besiegers, unable to pass the confused heap of struggling beings, who were trampling on each other in fearful confusion, — the stronger pitilessly crushing his fallen brethren without compunction or remorse, — broke down a trellis which surmounted a hedge, and, pouring in upon the astonished workmen belonging to the factory, in a manner hemmed them in between two fires. For a time the attacked party resisted courageously; but, perceiving Ciboule, followed by some of her horrible associates and a quantity of the loose hangers-on of the Barriers, whose evil countenances sufficiently attested their lawless designs, rushing up the staircase leading to the Maison Commune, where the women and children had taken refuge, the greater number precipitately pursued, in dread of the consequences to the weaker part of the establishment. Seeing the interruption offered to their progress, some of Ciboule's companions turned quickly around upon the workmen, and effectually cut off the pursuit by the staircase; while the hag herself, attended by a rabble of both sexes, made their way, without molestation, into the

chambers they approached, plundering or destroying all that fell in their way.

A door, which at first resisted their efforts, was quickly broken open; and Ciboule, brandishing her staff, and half wild with savage triumph, rushed in, her lank locks floating over her hideous countenance. Within the apartment was a second door, conducting to an inner apartment, and before it knelt a beautiful girl (it was Angèle), who seemed as though she had previously endeavoured to defend the entrance against the intruders, by throwing her slender weight against the door by which the rioters had entered. Pale as marble, the terrified girl, without rising from her knees, exclaimed, in supplicating tones:

"I implore of you not to harm my mother!"

"No, no!" screamed the disgusting hag, "we will tackle you first; your mother shall come next!" and, suiting the action to the word, Ciboule grasped the half fainting girl in her hard, coarse grasp, while the rest of her companions occupied themselves in smashing the various articles of furniture with their bludgeons, or in stealing whatever was portable. Struggling alike to escape from the infuriated rage of Ciboule, and to prevent her entering the chamber in which her mother had taken refuge, Angèle uttered loud and piercing cries; while her parent, leaning from her window, called upon Agricola to come to their assistance. The smith had commenced a second deadly encounter with the quarryman. Their hammers were useless in the close quarters to which they had now come. With glaring eyeballs and clenched teeth, they fought with deadly and determined fury; chest against chest; wrestling, twisting in each other's firm embrace; both striving by every art to throw his antagonist. Agricola, who was stooping, held the left leg of his adversary under his right arm, having accomplished this manœuvre when bending to avoid a violent kick aimed at him by his enemy; but such was the her-

culean power possessed by the chief of the Loups, that, although obliged to support himself entirely on one leg, he stood fixed and immovable as a tower of stone. With the hand which was free (the other was gripped by Agricola as though fixed in a vice) he sought, by repeated blows, to break the jaws of the young smith, who, with bent head, was using his forehead with all his might against the hollow of his adversary's chest.

"Here goes to knock all the teeth out of the Dévorant's mouth!" cried the quarrier. "He will neither eat his own bread nor that of the Loups for the future!"

"You are no Loup!" exclaimed the young smith, redoubling his efforts. "The real Loups are brave fellows, who would be ashamed to fight ten men against one."

"Loup or not, I mean to smash your teeth for you!"

"Take care I do not first spoil you for breaking into people's dwellings, by sending you home lame of a leg."

So saying, the smith dealt so violent a blow on the quarryman's leg, that, uttering a scream of agony, the latter, suddenly stretching out his head, bit Agricola deep on the side of his neck, with all the savage fury of a wild beast. The sudden agony occasioned by this brutal attack caused the smith to let go his assailant's leg; when, making an almost superhuman effort, the quarryman threw himself, with all his weight, upon Agricola, who staggered, and fell under him.

At this instant the mother of Angèle, leaning from one of the upper windows, screamed out in accents of distress, "Help! help! M. Agricola, my child is being murdered!"

"Let me go!" exclaimed Agricola, gasping for breath; "let me go, I say, and, upon the word of an honest man, I promise to finish our quarrel to-morrow, or when you please!"

"No, no! No second-hand dishes for me. I like my meat when it is hot," returned the quarrier, seizing the

young smith by the throat with one hand, while with the other he held him down, trying at the same time to kneel upon his chest.

"Help! For God's sake, help!" reiterated the mother of Angèle, in a distracted voice, "or my daughter will be murdered!"

"Mercy, mercy! I ask for mercy," exclaimed Agricola, striving by the most desperate efforts to escape from his adversary. "Let me go, I say!"

"I can't," replied the quarryman. "I have too much pleasure in breaking your bones!"

Rendered furious by his dread of the peril Angèle might be in, Agricola redoubled his efforts; when, just as his strength was failing him, an unexpected turn was given to the combat. The quarryman felt himself seized by a sharp set of teeth on the fleshy part of his leg, while three or four powerful blows, dealt by a vigorous arm, were applied to his head. At once dismayed, and suffering too much pain to retain his hold of Agricola, the savage quarrier was compelled to let him go; while he endeavoured to defend himself from the blows, which, however, ceased directly he set Agricola free.

"Thanks, dear father!" cried the young smith, rising up; "you have saved my life. Heaven grant it may not be too late to save that of Angèle!"

"Run, run, my boy! Never mind me!" exclaimed Dagobert; and, without waiting for a second bidding, Agricola rushed on towards the Maison Commune.

Accompanied by Killjoy, Dagobert, as has been already mentioned, had attended the daughters of Marshal Simon to visit their grandfather. Arriving in the midst of the tumult, the soldier had rallied a party of the terrified workmen, and set them to defend the entrance of the chamber into which the father of the marshal had been carried; and it was from this post that the old veteran had observed the imminent danger of his son.

A rush of combatants soon separated Dagobert from

the savage quarrier, who lay extended on the ground without speech or consciousness.

Agricola, flying on the wings of impatience, soon reached the staircase belonging to the Maison Commune, and, wrought up to more than his usual energy by the danger of her he loved, soon cleared his way through the opposing crowd, who in vain disputed his passage, and rushed towards the corridor, on which opened the chamber of Angèle. At the moment when he arrived there, the poor girl was mechanically defending her face with her two hands against Ciboule, who had fallen upon her like a hyena on her prey, and was endeavouring to scratch and tear her cheeks.

Agricola, with the speed of thought, rushed at the horrible hag, seized her by her yellow and matted locks with irresistible strength, and, flinging her from him, stretched her on her back with a violent and effective jerk.

Ciboule, though so rudely attacked, still exasperated with rage, rose instantly. At this moment several workmen, who had followed Agricola, were gaining the advantage in the contest, and whilst the smith lifted Angèle half fainting in his arms, and conveyed her to another chamber, Ciboule and her gang were forcibly driven away from this part of the house.

After the first rally, the very small number of real Loups, who, as Agricola said, were steady workmen who had had the weakness to allow themselves to be ensnared into this enterprise under a pretext of a companionship quarrel, seeing the excess which the ruffians, who had accompanied them against their wills, had committed, — these brave Loups, we must state, suddenly took part with the Dévorans.

"It is no longer a question of Loups and Dévorans," said one of the most determined Loups to Olivier, with whom he had been boldly and freely fighting. "Here are none but honest workmen, who ought to unite to get

rid of a gang of robbers, who have only come to rifle and rob."

"Yes," added another, "it was against our wishes that they began to break the windows of your house."

"It was the quarrier who begun all the riot," said another. "The real Loups repudiate it altogether. He will suffer for this."

"We may bully and squabble a bit with each other, but we do not esteem one another the less."[1]

This defection of a portion of the assailants, unhappily but a very small portion, still gave fresh courage to the workmen of the factory, and all Loups and Dévorans, although greatly inferior in numbers, united against the scamps of the Barriers and the other vagabonds who were advancing to such deplorable lengths.

One band of these wretches, excited and stimulated by the little weasel-faced man, the secret emissary of Baron Tripeaud, went in a body to the workshops of M. Hardy. Then there commenced a lamentable devastation, for these ruffians, full of rage and destruction, broke remorselessly machinery of the most costly description, and tools of the most delicate construction; goods half completed were pitilessly destroyed, and a savage emulation exciting these villains, the workshops, so lately models of economical arrangement and orderly toil, now presented but broken fragments. The yards were blocked up with goods of all descriptions, which were flung out of the windows with fierce shouts or

[1] We beg it may be understood by the reader that it is only the necessity of our story which has assigned to the Loups the character of aggressors. Whilst we are endeavouring to illustrate one of the abuses of companionship, which, by the way, are daily diminishing, we would not willingly assign a character of savage hostility to one party more than the other — to the Loups more than to the Dévorans. The Loups, who are stone-masons, are usually very hard-working, intelligent workmen, whose position is the more deserving of interest inasmuch as their labours of almost mathematical precision are severe and toilsome, and as their business sometimes stands still during three or four months of the year, it being one of those which the winter inevitably precludes. A great many Loups, in order to learn their trade thoroughly, follow every evening a course of lectures on linear geometry, applied to the cutting of stones, analogous to those taught by M. Agricola Perdiguier for carpenters. Several stone-masons exhibited an architectural model in plaster at the last exposition.

bursts of atrocious laughter. Then, too, thanks to the suggestions of the little weasel-faced man, M. Hardy's books of business, those commercial archives so indispensable to the merchant, were flung to the winds, torn, trampled under foot by a sort of infernal ring, composed of all that was most foul and infamous in this assemblage, — men and women, dirty, ragged, and destructive, who had taken each other by the hand and were circling around whilst uttering horrid shrieks and clamour.

Strange and painful contrast! Within hearing of these horrible scenes of tumult and devastation a scene of painful and imposing calmness was going on in the chamber of Marshal Simon's father, where several devoted men were watching.

The old workman was stretched on a bed, his head wrapped in a bandage, under which were seen his gray and bloody locks; his features were livid, his respiration oppressed, and his eyes fixed, but without any sight in them. Marshal Simon, standing up at the head of the bed, bending over his parent, was gazing with anxiety and despair for the smallest sign of sense in the dying man, whose sinking pulse a doctor was feeling. Rose and Blanche, brought by Dagobert, were kneeling at the bed with their hands clasped, their eyes bathed in tears. A little farther off, and half hidden in the shadow of the chamber, for the hours had flown and night had come on, was Dagobert, with his arms folded over his breast and his features working convulsively.

There reigned a profound and solemn silence in the apartment, broken from time to time by the stifled sobs of Rose and Blanche, or by the painful breathings of old M. Simon.

The eyes of the marshal were dry, gloomy, and burning; he never moved them from off his father's face, unless to interrogate the doctor by his look.

There are singular fatalities. This doctor was M. Baleinier. The *Maison de Santé* of the doctor was very

close to the nearest barrier of the factory, and being famous in the environs, they had run to his house first to seek medical assistance.

Suddenly Doctor Baleinier made a movement. Marshal Simon, who had not taken his eyes off him, exclaimed:

"Hope!"

"At least, M. le Duc, the pulse is somewhat stronger."

"He is saved!" cried the marshal.

"Don't give way to false hopes, M. le Duc," replied the doctor, gravely; "the pulse is recovering, but it is the result of the powerful stimuli which I have applied to his feet; but I cannot pronounce as to what may be the issue of this crisis."

"My father, my father, do you hear me?" exclaimed the marshal, when he saw the old man make a slight movement of the head and his eyelids work gently.

In effect he soon opened his eyes, and intelligence beamed in them once more.

"Father, you live! Do you recognise me?" exclaimed the marshal, overcome by joy and hope.

"Pierre, are you there?" said the old man, in a feeble tone. "Your hand, — give —" And he moved a little.

"There, dear father!" cried the marshal, pressing the old man's hand in his own.

Then yielding to a burst of irrepressible joy, he threw his arms around his parent and covered his hands, face, and gray hair with kisses, exclaiming:

"Thanks, thanks, my God! He is spared! He lives, he lives!"

At this instant the noise and tumult, occasioned by the renewal of the combat between the Loups and Dévorans, reached even the ears of the dying man.

"That noise, that noise!" cried he. "What means it, and those wild shouts? Are our people fighting?"

"It is all over now, I believe," said the marshal, hoping to tranquillise his parent.

"Pierre," said the old man, in a feeble and broken tone, "I have not — long to —"

"Dearest father!"

"My son, my beloved son! Let me speak to you — while — I am yet able, — let me tell you —"

"Sir," said Balcinier, earnestly, to the old workman, "Heaven may yet work a miracle in your favour. Seek to invoke its aid through the mediation of a priest. Let us send for some holy man!"

"I thank you, sir," replied the old artisan; "but I need no priest. I have lived a long and an honest life, and fear not to resign my spirit unto him who gave it. But my last sighs shall be breathed in the arms of my worthy and excellent son!"

"Talk not of dying, my father, I implore you," cried the marshal. "It cannot — must not be!"

"Pierre," said the old man, in a tone which, though firm at first, became gradually weaker and weaker, "you asked me a short time since my advice — touching an affair of deep importance, — and it almost seems as though the desire — to point out to you — what your duty to yourself and others requires of you — has recalled me for a time to life, — for I could not die in peace — if I knew you were about to commit any action unworthy — of you or your family. Listen, then, — my son, — my brave, my beloved son. At this solemn moment — a parent cannot give wrong counsel; — you have a weighty and most serious duty to perform, — therefore, as you would act as becomes a man of honour, — and avoid disobedience to my dying commands, — you must — unhesitatingly —"

The old man's voice became more and more feeble, and by the time he had uttered the last words it was entirely unintelligible. The only words which, by bending closely over his father, the marshal could distinguish were, "Napoleon II. — oath — dishonour — my son." After which the lips of the old workman continued for

some time to move mechanically, and then — all was over.

At the moment when M. Simon expired, the stillness of the night was disturbed by loud and frenzied cries of "Fire, fire!" and flames burst out from a portion of the workrooms filled with inflammable materials, and into which the little weasel-faced man had been seen to glide; while from afar might be heard the beating of drums, announcing the approach of a detachment of troops sent for from the Barrier.

Spite of every effort to subdue the fire, the flames had now for more than an hour preyed upon the manufactory, and in the clear frostiness of the starlight night it blazed and crackled as the strong northerly wind increased its fury. An individual was at this moment making his way across the fields, but prevented by an elevation of the ground before him from seeing the fire. This person was M. Hardy, who had chosen to walk home across the fields, in the hopes of finding relief from the fever which preyed upon him,— a fever deadly as the anguish shiver of a dying man.

He had been told but too true a tale. The adored mistress, the noble-minded woman, whose affection would have consoled him for the fearful deception practised on him, had quitted France! Alas! there was no reason to doubt it. Marguerite had departed for America; and, in obedience to her mother's commands, had not even written one line to reconcile him to her loss. Her mother had exacted from her that she should thus bitterly expiate her forgetfulness of her marriage vows, and Marguerite had obeyed the stern decree. Often had she said to her lover, "I could never hesitate between my mother's wishes and your affection." Too faithfully had she followed this doctrine of maternal obedience; she was gone, and no hope — no, not the faintest glimmer — remained. The ocean rolled its waters between himself and the object of

his love, whom he knew to be too blindly obedient and submissive to her mother to leave a hope of ever again beholding her. No, all was ended between them, and each was to the other as though such a being had never existed; so that he could no more promise himself the soft sympathy of Marguerite's love to console him for the shock his heart had received in the treachery of his dearest friend. Thus, then, were the two most cherished objects of his soul torn away, plucked rudely forth from the heart in which they were enshrined, broken, destroyed for ever, and that at the same time — almost by the same blow.

What, then, is left the poor sensitive being a doting mother called her mimosa? Where shall he seek consolation for his lost love, or whither turn for healing balm to cure those wounds perfidy and treachery had dealt by the hands of him he esteemed as a second brother? Bethink thee, thou heartstricken mourner, of that blessed spot thou createdst after thine own image, of that happy, flourishing colony where, thanks to thee, labour reaps its reward and full enjoyments; think of the worthy fellows who hourly bless thy name, who hast rendered them prosperous and respectable as men, and whose well-merited gratitude will ever be yours. With them you will find a true and noble affection and gratitude; return, then, to the worthy artisans, who will hail thy coming with unmixed and unfeigned joy, and there be thine asylum, thy shelter, amid all the wreck of thy hopes and dreams of trust and affection.

The peaceful calm of this smiling retreat, the sight of the matchless happiness enjoyed there by the beings thou hast so largely benefited, will heal thy lacerated wounds and pour comfort into thy bleeding heart.

Yet a little farther, and thou mayest behold from the summit of yonder hill, afar off in the plain, that paradise of labour and for such as labour, erected by thee, and where thou art deservedly worshipped and blessed as a god.

M. Hardy ascended the small elevation which had hitherto concealed the factory from his view.

At this moment the flames, which had been for a time repressed, broke out with additional fury from the windows of the Maison Commune, whither the conflagration had now extended.

A bright light, first white, and then glowing red and deep copper colour, illumined the horizon for miles around.

M. Hardy gazed with a species of bewildered stupefaction at the appalling sight.

All at once an immense body of flames rushed up amid a whirlwind of smoke, accompanied by a shower of glittering sparks and pieces of fire, lighting up the country for a considerable distance, and bringing its glowing reflection to the very spot where M. Hardy stood. The violence of the northerly wind, alternately driving and repressing the flames which curled and wreathed beneath its influence, quickly brought to the ears of its wretched owner the hurried sounds of the alarm-bell belonging to the blazing factory.

Part IX.

THE BLACK PANTHER OF JAVA

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE NEGOTIATOR.

A FEW days have elapsed since the burning down of M. Hardy's factory. The following scene takes place in the Rue Clovis, in the house where Rodin had a lodging, which he had now quitted, the house also inhabited by Rose-Pompon, who, without the slightest scruple, availed herself of the ménage of her friend Philemon.

It was about noon; Rose-Pompon was alone in the student's chamber, breakfasting very gaily at the corner of her fire. But what a singular breakfast! What a peculiar fire! What an odd chamber!

Let the reader imagine a tolerably large apartment, lighted up by two windows without curtains; for as the look-out was an open space, the occupier of the room had no fear of curious eyes. One side of the room served for dressing in, and there hung, on a large cloak-pin, the gallant *débardeur's* costume, appertaining unto Rose-Pompon; not far from the waterman's vest, belonging unto the Philemon aforesaid, with his wide trousers of coarse gray cloth, as entirely smeared all over with tar, thousand portholes, thousand sharks, thousand whales, as if this intrepid navigator had occupied the maintop of a frigate during a voyage around the world. A gown of Rose-Pompon's hung gracefully over the legs of a pair of pantaloons with feet to them, which seemed as if coming out of the bottom of the skirt. Placed on the lower shelf of a small bookcase, very dusty and neglected, there was, beside three old boots (why three boots?) and a

considerable amount of empty bottles, a death's head, a souvenir of astrology and friendship, left to Philemon by a friend and fellow student in medicine. With a pleasantry very common in the *Pays Latin* (the quarter in which the medical students in Paris "most do congregate"), this head held between its teeth, which were splendidly white, a clay tobacco-pipe, with a blackened bowl; besides this, the shining skull was half concealed beneath an old rakish-looking hat, put on knowingly on one side, and covered with faded flowers and ribands. When Philemon was drunk, he used very gravely to contemplate this ossuary, and gave vent to sundry monologues of dithyrambic vein, relative to the philosophical connection between death and the foolish joys of this life.

Two or three plaster masks, with their repulsive noses and chins, more or less dilapidated, were nailed to the wall, testifying the temporary bent Philemon had had for the science of phrenology, that patient and reflective study, whence he had drawn the undeniable conclusion that, having, to an extraordinary degree, the bump of debt, it was necessary that he should resign himself to the fatality of his organisation, which imposed on him a creditor as a vital necessity.

On the mantelpiece stood intact, and in all its majesty, the monster glass of the aquatic, in full costume, having on the one side a china teapot, which had lost its spout, and flanked on the other by an inkstand of black wood, whose orifice was half concealed beneath a green and mossy bed of vegetation.

From time to time the silence of this retreat was interrupted by the cooing of the pigeons, to whom Rose-Pompon had given a cordial hospitality in Philemon's study. Chilly as a quail, Rose-Pompon kept close to the fireside, and seemed to rejoice greatly in the soothing influence of the sunbeams which shone brightly upon her.

The whimsical little creature had on a very odd cos-

tume, but one which singularly brought out her fresh youth of seventeen, her piquant features, and her attractive manner, whilst her beautiful light hair was (as usual) carefully combed and arranged.

Rose-Pompon had, with great ingenuity, put on over her own chemise the large scarlet woollen shirt of Philemon, a part and parcel of his rowing costume. The collar, open and falling down, showed the whiteness of the young girl's own garment, whilst her own neck and dimpled shoulder were so fair that the scarlet shirt seemed reflected in them with a rosy tint. Her fresh and well-turned arms came from beneath the large, tucked-up sleeves, and her well-formed legs, crossed over each other, were clad in a tight, white silk stocking, met at the ankle by a small slipper. A black silk handkerchief fastened the scarlet shirt around the wasp-like waist of Rose-Pompon, and gave to the attire a grace worthy of a modern Phidias, and perfectly original.

We have said that the fire by which Rose-Pompon sat was singular; our reader may judge. The extravagant jade, the prodigal puss, finding herself short of wood, was economically warming herself with Philemon's boot-trees, which, it must be confessed, offered to the eye a combustible which burnt with admirable regularity.

We have also said that Rose-Pompon's breakfast was singular; let the reader judge. On a small table placed before her was the basin into which she had recently dipped her fresh and pretty face, in water no less fresh; from the bottom of this basin, now metamorphosed into a salad bowl, Rose-Pompon took, it must be confessed, with the tips of her finger, some large leaves of salad, as green as grass, and seasoned with vinegar, enough to choke most persons; then she crunched these verdant vegetables with all the power of her small white teeth, whose enamel was proof against all such dangers, whilst, as a beverage, she had mixed a glass of water in syrup of currants, and stirred up the mixture with a small

wooden mustard-spoon. As a wind-up, there were a dozen olives in one of those little blue and opaque glass trays, that fetch about thirteen pence halfpenny; and her dessert consisted of nuts, which were being half roasted on a shovel nearly red-hot from the flames of Philemon's boot-trees.

That Rose-Pompon, with food of such incredible and wild taste, was worthy of her name, from the brilliancy of her complexion, is one of those divine miracles which reveal the omnipotence of youth and health.

Rose-Pompon, after having crunched her salad, was about to munch her olives, when a gentle tap was heard on the door, which was discreetly bolted withinside.

"Who's there?" said Rose-Pompon.

"A friend — an old acquaintance," replied a sonorous and mirthful voice; "why have you fastened your door?"

"What! Is it you, Nini-Moulin?"

"Yes, my beloved ward. Open instantly, — my business is urgent."

"Open to you — really now — what, as I am? That would be nice!"

"I should say so! As you are now would be nice — very nice, indeed! Ah, rosiest of all the roses that the little god Cupid ever nestled amongst!"

"Go — go, and preach Lent and morality in your newspaper, fat apostle!" said Rose-Pompon, returning the scarlet shirt to the rest of Philemon's costume.

"Ah, now, are we really going to have a long talk in this way through the keyhole, for the extreme edification of all the neighbours?" said Nini-Moulin. "You must reflect that I have very important things to tell you, — things that will astonish your weak nerves."

"Well, then, give me time just to slip on my gown, you old plague!"

"Oh, if you are afraid of shocking my modesty, I beg you will not overrate my delicacy. I am not at all squeamish, and am quite willing to take you as you are."

"Here's a pretty darling for the sanctified elect!" said Rose-Pompon, opening the door with one hand, whilst, with the other, she finished fastening her dress about her nymph-like shape.

"Well, here you are back again in your dove-cote, pretty bird of passage!" said Nini-Moulin, crossing his arms and looking at Rose-Pompon with a serio-comic air. "And whence have you arrived, I should like to know? For three whole days you have not perched here, naughty little dove!"

"Quite correct, Nini; I only returned last night. So, then, you called during my absence?"

"Every day, and sometimes twice a day, mademoiselle, for I have very serious things to talk to you about."

"Serious things! Oh, then, what a laugh we shall have!"

"Quite the contrary, it is a very serious affair," said Nini-Moulin, seating himself. "But, in the first place, what have you been doing during the three days that you have deserted this domicile, so conjugal and Philemonic? I must know that before I say another word."

"Will you have some olives?" said Rose-Pompon, as she masticated one of the oleaginous berries.

"Oh, that's your answer; I take. Unhappy Philemon!"

"There's no unhappy Philemon in the case, slanderer. Clara has had a death in her house, and during the first few days after the burial she was afraid of sleeping alone all night."

"I thought Clara was quite well provided against all such alarms."

"Then, great viper, you are mistaken, for I went to the poor girl's to keep her company."

At this declaration the religious writer hummed between his teeth, with an air perfectly incredulous and derisive.

"What! You mean to insinuate that I have been playing Philemon some tricks?" exclaimed Rose-Pom-

pon, cracking a nut with all the indignation of virtue unjustly suspected.

"I did not say tricks, but one little trick, small, and *couleur de Rose-Pompon.*"

"I repeat to you that it was not for my pleasure that I went away from here; on the contrary, for, during the time, poor, dear Céphyse has gone away."

"Yes, the Queen-Bacchanal has gone on her travels; Mother Arsène told me that. But when I talk to you of Philemon, you answer me with Céphyse, and that is not a clear way of reply."

"May I be eaten up by the black panther which they show at the Porte St. Martin, if I do not speak true. And, apropos of that, you must have two stalls, and take me to see these animals, my dear Nini-Moulin; they tell me these savage brutes are such loves."

"Why, are you mad?"

"Mad?"

"True, I may guide your youth as a rollicking grandpa, in the midst of tulips, more or less storm-blown; true, but I do not risk finding any of my pious paymasters there; but to take you to a Lent spectacle, for there are nothing but the beasts to be seen, why, I should meet nothing but the 'elect,' and very nice I should look with you under my arm!"

"Put on a false nose, and straps under your trousers, my stout darling, and no one would know thee."

"I am not talking about false noses, but of what I have to tell you, since you assure me you have no new love-affair on hand."

"I swear it," said Rose-Pompon, solemnly, extending her left hand horizontally, whilst with the right she conveyed a nut between her teeth, and then she added, with a surprised air, as she contemplated the crammed pockets of Nini-Moulin's *paletot-sac:*

"Ah, what great pockets you have got! What can you have stuffed in them?"

"Matters which concern you, Rose-Pompon," replied Dumoulin, in a serious tone.

"Me?"

"Rose-Pompon," said Nini-Moulin, with a majestic air, "would you like a carriage? Can you prefer a splendid suite of rooms to this frightful dog-hole? Would you like to be a duchess?"

"Nonsense — more fun! Come, will you take some olives? If not, I shall finish them all — there's only one left."

Without replying to this gastronomic offer, Nini-Moulin rummaged in one of his pockets, whence he extracted a case containing a very pretty bracelet, which he dangled before the eyes of the young girl.

"Oh, what a love of a bracelet!" she said, clasping her two small hands together. "A green snake biting his tail — emblem of my love for Philemon."

"Don't mention Philemon's name, it annoys me," said Nini-Moulin, clasping the bracelet around Rose-Pompon's wrist, who made no opposition, but laughed like a mad thing, and said:

"It is a purchase you have had to make for some one, stout apostle, and you want to try the effect. Well, really, it is a very charming trinket."

"Rose-Pompon," replied Nini-Moulin, "will you or will you not have servants, an opera-box, and a thousand francs a month for the expenses of your toilet?"

"Still carrying on the joke? Go on, go on," said the young girl, making the bracelet sparkle whilst she ate the nuts. "But why do you keep on at the same jest; why don't you find some others?"

Nini-Moulin's hand again dived into his pocket, and this time he drew out a magnificent chain and chatelaine, which he put around Rose-Pompon's neck.

"Oh, what a duck of a chain!" exclaimed the young girl, looking alternately at the sparkling gem and the religious writer. "If you also selected this, you have

really excellent taste; but ain't I a good girl to allow myself to be made into a show window for your trinkets?"

"Rose-Pompon," said Nini-Moulin, even more majestically than before, "these trifles are nothing compared with what you may aspire to if you listen to the counsels of your old friend."

Rose-Pompon began to look at Dumoulin with surprise, and said to him, "What does this mean, Nini-Moulin? Explain, I beg of you. What counsels do you mean?"

Dumoulin made no reply, but again dipping his hand into his unwearied pockets, he this time drew forth a parcel which he carefully untied. It was a splendid mantilla of black lace.

Rose-Pompon arose full of fresh admiration, and Dumoulin adroitly threw the rich mantilla over the shoulders of the young girl.

"What a superb one! I never saw its fellow! What a lovely pattern, and how splendidly embroidered!" said Rose-Pompon, examining it with close scrutiny, and, it must be added, with utter disinterestedness; then she added, "Why, have you got a whole shop in your pocket? Where did you get so many fine things?" Then bursting into a fit of laughter, which suffused her lovely face, she added, "I know — I know, it is the wedding paraphernalia of Madame Sainte-Colombe. Accept my congratulations!"

"And where should I fish for the wherewithal to buy all these wonderful affairs?" asked Nini-Moulin. "All this, I repeat, is yours, if you will have them, and listen to me!"

"What!" said Rose-Pompon, with amaze, "are you really serious?"

"Perfectly serious."

"Your proposal to live as a great lady?"

"These jewels are the guarantee of the reality of these offers."

"And is it you, my poor dear Nini-Moulin, who propose this to me on behalf of another?"

"One minute, if you please," said the religious writer, with an air of comic solemnity; "you ought to know me too well, oh, most cherished of wards, not to feel quite sure I should be the last person to persuade you to any improper proceeding. No, I have too much self-respect for that; even if I could forget that my so doing would be an insult to Philemon, who has confided to me the charge of your virtue and morality!"

"Come, Nini-Moulin," said Rose-Pompon, more and more bewildered, "leave off talking all this nonsense, for, upon my word and honour, I don't understand a word you are saying."

"Yet nothing can be more simple — I —"

"Oh, now I see!" exclaimed Rose-Pompon, interrupting Nini-Moulin. "Somebody has fallen in love with me, and sends you to offer me his hand and heart, with a few pretty little etceteras, just to coax me to accept them. Why could not you have said so at once?"

"Somebody wanting to marry you," cried Dumoulin, shrugging up his shoulders; "I should rather think not!"

"Nothing about being married!" cried Rose-Pompon, falling back into her original surprise.

"Nothing whatever, my little dear."

"But the proposals you have to make are strictly correct, are they not, my fat apostle?"

"Pure as your own eyes, or diamonds of the first water." And here Dumoulin spoke the truth.

"You will not ask me to betray poor dear Philemon?"

"Not in the most trifling degree."

"Or bind me to be faithful to any one else?"

"Certainly not."

For a few moments Rose-Pompon remained utterly speechless from utter confusion of ideas; then, impatient

at all this bewilderment, she exclaimed, "Come now, do leave off all this nonsense. I am not quite such a simpleton as to imagine that anybody would think it worth while to set me up for a duchess for nothing, for what should there be in my appearance to induce any person to take so much trouble about me?" said the sly girl, with a well-assumed expression of modest humility.

"What should they see? Why, everything the heart could desire."

"But still," said Rose-Pompon, more amd more perplexed, "what am I required to give in return for all this?"

"Nothing at all!"

"Nothing?"

"Not so much even as this," said Nini-Moulin, biting the end of his nail.

"Well, then, if I am to give nothing, what shall I have to do?"

"Nothing in the world, but to look as pretty as possible, amuse yourself, and ride about in a carriage. So, you see, your duties will not be very fatiguing; added to which, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are assisting in a good action."

"By living like a duchess?"

"Yes; therefore pray do not ask me any further questions,—for, indeed, I could not answer them if I would; besides, you will not be obliged to remain against your will. Just try the life I propose to you; if it suits you, continue it, if not, you will be at liberty to return to your Philemonic establishment whenever you please."

"That is fair enough!"

"Well, then, I say, try it. What do you risk by so doing?"

"Nothing, certainly; but I cannot persuade myself you are in earnest; besides," added she, hesitatingly, "I scarcely know whether I ought."

Nini-Moulin went to the window, opened it, and said

to Rose-Pompon, who ran to see what he was looking at, "What is that before the door of the house?"

"A nice, pretty little carriage, upon my word. Oh, dear, oh, dear, how I should like to have just an hour's ride in it!"

"Well, then, you may have your wish as soon as you like, for that carriage is yours, and is there to await your orders."

"Waiting for me?" said Rose-Pompon; "why, must I make up my mind this very minute?"

"Or refuse altogether."

"Must I positively give an answer to-day?"

"This very minute."

"But where are you going to take me?"

"How should I know?"

"Not know where you yourself are to conduct me? Nonsense!"

"Indeed I do not (and again Dumoulin spoke the truth); the coachman has his orders."

"Now do you know all this is excessively droll, Nini-Moulin?"

"I hope so. If it were not, where would be the pleasure?"

"You are right."

"So, then, you mean to accept my offer, — that's well, I am delighted at it, both for your sake and my own."

"How for yours?"

"Because by accepting what I propose, you will render me a great service."

"Render you a service? How? In what manner? what sort of a service?"

"Never mind how, provided you do serve and oblige me."

"Certainly; then I don't care about knowing how."

"Now then — shall we go?"

"After all, why need I be afraid? They can't eat me

or drink me," said Rose-Pompon, resolutely, as she skipped to a closet, and took from thence a pretty little pink cap, which she arranged before a cracked mirror, placing it so as to display her snow-white neck, with the silky roots of her glossy hair; thus giving to her youthful features a look of archness almost amounting to pleasure-seeking joy. "And now for my cloak," said she to Nini-Moulin, who appeared wonderfully relieved since she had made up her mind to accept his proposition.

"A cloak, indeed!" returned the cicisbeo, feeling for the last time in his last pocket, — a regular wallet, — from which he drew a magnificent cashmere shawl, which he placed on the shoulders of Rose-Pompon.

"Good gracious me!" exclaimed the astonished girl, out of breath with so joyful a surprise. "What a love of a shawl, — a real, downright cashmere, I declare!" Then with an expression of countenance indicative of the heroic determination of her mind, she added, "I have decided; yes, I will run whatever risks are before me!" So saying, she lightly descended the stairs, followed by Nini-Moulin. The worthy dealer in fruit and charcoal was, as usual, in her shop.

"Good morning, mademoiselle," said she to the young girl; "you are up betimes this morning."

"Yes, so I am, Mother Arsène. Here is my key!"

"Thank you, mademoiselle."

"Oh, my goodness!" said Rose-Pompon, turning quickly around to Nini-Moulin, and speaking in a low voice, drawing him, at the same time, to a distance from the portress; "but now I think of it! — Suppose Philemon — "

"Suppose what?"

"That he should return!"

"Oh, the d—l!" said Nini-Moulin, scratching his ear.

"Yes, what will Philemon say, I should like to know,

if he arrives before I come back? Am I wanted for long?"

"You will be absent three or four months, I believe."

"Not more?"

"I think not."

"Oh, very well then," said Rose-Pompon; then returning to the fruit-woman, she said, after a minute's reflection, "Mother Arsène, if Philemon should arrive, tell him — I am gone out — upon business."

"I will, mademoiselle."

"And tell him to wait till I come back, and not to be fidgety."

"I'll be sure to say so, mademoiselle."

"And desire him on no account to forget to feed my pigeons that are in his room."

"I'll not fail to give your message, mademoiselle."

"Good-bye, Mother Arsène."

"Good-bye, mademoiselle."

And with these parting words, Rose-Pompon triumphantly ascended the carriage in company with Nini-Moulin.

"D—l take me," said Jacques Dumoulin, "if I can guess what is to be the upshot of all this! However," added he, as the carriage drove rapidly from the Rue Clovis, "I have made up for my late blunder, and now I care nothing for the rest of the affair."

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE SECRET.

The following scene occurred a few days after the carrying off of Rose-Pompon by Nini-Moulin.

Mlle. de Cardoville was seated, and in a deep reverie, in her private room, hung with green damask, and having an ebony bookcase, relieved by tall caryatides of gilt metal.

By certain significant signs it was evident that Mlle. de Cardoville had sought, in the fine arts, for distraction from sorrowful and serious reflections. Near an open piano was a harp placed close to a music-stand. On a table, covered with boxes of crayons and sketches, were several sheets of drawing-paper covered with highly coloured sketches. The greater number were of Asiatic scenery, warmed with all the glow of an Eastern sun.

Faithful to her fancy for dressing herself when at home in a picturesque manner, Mlle. de Cardoville resembled, on this occasion, one of those haughty portraits of Velasquez, with their noble and aristocratic look. Her gown was of black watered silk, very full in the skirt, and very long in the waist, with slashed sleeves, puffed out with pink satin, embroidered with jet tags. A Spanish frill, very much starched, reached almost to her chin, and was confined around her neck by a red riband. This collar sloped gradually over the pink satin corsage laced with jet beads, and terminated in a point at the waist.

It is impossible to describe how perfectly this black

dress, with its ample and bright folds, relieved by the pink and shining jet, harmonised with the dazzling whiteness of Adrienne's skin and the golden hues of her beautiful hair, which fell in long and silky ringlets down to her waist.

The young girl was half sitting, half reclining on a causeuse, covered with green damask, the back of which was high towards the chimney, and gradually sloped down to the feet. A kind of light trellis of gilt metal, semicircular, about five feet high, was covered over with splendid passion-flowers, which were planted in a deep flower-box of ebony, whence the trellis proceeded, and thus covered the couch with a sort of screen of foliage and large flowers, green without and purple within, and looking as highly enamelled as those flowers which we see on the Saxony porcelain. A sweet and delicate perfume, like violets and jasmine mingling, was emitted from the corollæ of these splendid *passiflores quadrangulosa.*

It was strange to see the large quantity of new books (Adrienne had bought them two or three days before), only recently cut open, which were scattered about her, some on the causeuse, others on a small stand; and, amongst others, were large atlases, with engravings, lying on the splendid marten-skin carpet which was spread at the foot of the sofa. Still more strange, these books, of different size and by different authors, all treated of the same subject.

Adrienne's posture revealed a sort of melancholy depression. Her cheeks were pale, whilst a light and bluish ring around her half-closed black eyes gave them an expression of the deepest sadness.

Many motives conspired to cause this dejection, and, amongst others, was that of the disappearance of La Mayeux. Without entirely believing the perfidious insinuations of Rodin, who implied that, in her fear of being unmasked by him, she had not dared to remain in the

house, Adrienne still experienced a cruel and heartfelt pain when she reflected that this young girl in whom she had had such faith had fled from her almost sisterly hospitality without leaving her one word of grateful adieu; for they had taken care not to show to her benefactress the few lines which the poor sempstress had hastily written before she departed, and had only mentioned the note for five hundred francs found in her bureau; and this fact, which was so inexplicable, had also contributed to excite most painful suspicions in the mind of Mlle. de Cardoville. She already experienced the sad effects of that mistrust of all and everything which Rodin had counselled, that distrust and reserve becoming the more powerful as, for the first time in her life, Mlle. de Cardoville, until then a stranger to falsehood, had a secret to conceal, — a secret which was at once her happiness, her shame, and her torment.

Half reclining on her divan, thoughtful and melancholy, Adrienne, frequently lost in reverie, turned over one of her newly purchased volumes, when suddenly she gave a slight shriek of surprise, the hand which held the book trembled like a leaf, and she began to read with passionate attention and with the most eager curiosity. Soon her eyes kindled with enthusiasm, her smile became ineffably sweet, and she seemed at once proud, happy, and delighted; but at the moment when she had turned over another page her features expressed disappointment and vexation.

Then, again she recurred to that part which had caused her such delicious emotion; but this time she perused it with careful slowness, spelling, as it were, each page, and each line, and each word; then, from time to time, she paused, and then, pensively, with her brow bent and leaning on her lovely hand, she seemed to ponder in deepest reflection over the passages which she had just read with such tender and enthusiastic love. Arriving soon at a passage which so deeply im-

pressed her that a tear started in her eyes, she turned the volume suddenly to ascertain its author's name. For some seconds she contemplated this name with an expression of singular gratitude, and at length pressed it to her vermilion lips. After having again and again read and reread the lines which had so affected her, then, no doubt forgetting the letter in the thought, she fell into a fit of musing so deep that the volume slipped from her hand and fell on the floor.

During this reverie the look of the young lady mechanically rested on a beautiful bas-relief, supported on an ebony easel, and placed near one of the windows.

The splendid bronze, recently cast from a plaster mould of the antique, represented the triumph of the Indian Bacchus, and never had the Grecian art attained higher perfection. The youthful conqueror, half clothed in a lion's skin, which did not conceal the juvenile purity and beauty of his limbs, bore the stamp of divinity, standing erect on a car drawn by two tigers, with an air at once mild and commanding. He leaned with one hand on a thyrsus, and with the other guided his savage team with tranquil majesty. By the rare mixture of grace, strength, and calmness, it was easy to recognise the hero who had so boldly contended with his fellow men and the monsters of the forest.

The yellow tone of the light which was cast on this sculpture on one side brought out the figure of the youthful deity admirably; and as the relief was very high, thus lighted, it stood out like a splendid statue of pale gold from the dark and shaded bronze ground.

When Adrienne had first glanced at this rare combination of divine perfection, her features were calm and pensive, but her contemplation, at first almost mechanical, becoming more and more attentive and reflecting, the young girl rose suddenly from her seat, and approaching slowly towards the bas-relief, appeared to be gradually impressed with the singular resemblance.

Then a light tint began to suffuse the cheeks of Mlle. de Cardoville, which gradually spread over her cheeks, brow, and neck. She approached nearer to the bas-relief, and after having cast around her a furtive glance, as though ashamed and fearing to be surprised in a guilty action, she twice raised her hand, trembling with emotion, in order to touch, with the tips of her rosy fingers, the forehead of the Indian Bacchus.

But twice, with a sort of modest hesitation, she paused. At last the temptation became too strong, and giving way to the impulse, she, with her alabaster finger, after having delicately caressed the pale, gold countenance of the young god, pressed somewhat more tardily, for a second, his noble and pure forehead.

At this pressure, light as it was, Adrienne seemed to undergo an electric shock, and trembled violently; her eyes half closed, and after having swam for an instant in their humid brilliancy, she raised them towards heaven and closed them for an instant, as if they were weighed down by feeling; then her head fell back, her knees bent insensibly, her vermilion lips half opened to allow her warm breath to escape, and her bosom throbbed as if all the force of youth and life accelerated its beatings and impelled her blood; and then the burning countenance of Adrienne betrayed, in spite of herself, a sort of joy at once timid and impassioned, chaste and sensitive, whose expression was unutterably touching.

It is, in truth, unutterably touching to see a young virgin whose chaste brow first blushes with secret love. Does not the Creator of all things love the body of his creatures as well as the soul, his divine spark? Ought he not to be religiously glorified in the mind, as well as in the senses, with which he has so paternally gifted his creatures? Then they are impious blasphemers who seek to stifle divine sensations, instead of guiding and harmonising them with their heavenly source.

Suddenly Mlle. de Cardoville shuddered, raised her

head, opened her eyes as if she were recovering from a dream, retreated quickly and left the bas-relief, and then made several turns in the apartment, greatly agitated, and holding her burning hands to her forehead.

Then falling, almost exhausted, on a seat, her tears flowed abundantly, bitter grief was depicted on her countenance, which thus revealed the fierce internal contest under which she was suffering.

Then her tears gradually dried, and to this crisis of agony succeeded a sort of violent anger, extreme indignation against herself, which might be guessed from the words that escaped her.

"For the first time in my life I feel that I am weak and cowardly, — oh, yes, cowardly, very cowardly!"

The noise of a door which opened and shut roused Mlle. de Cardoville from her painful reverie. Georgette entered, and said to her mistress:

"Will mademoiselle receive M. le Comte de Montbron?"

Adrienne, knowing good taste too well to betray to her women any annoyance at a visit ill-timed, said to Georgette:

"Did you say to M. de Montbron I was at home?"

"Yes, mademoiselle."

"Then pray ask him to come in."

Although Mlle. de Cardoville felt at this moment exceedingly annoyed at the arrival of M. de Montbron, yet we should say that she felt for him an affection that was almost filial, a high esteem, and at the same time, by a contrast which is however very common, she almost invariably found her opinion entirely opposed to his; and the consequence was that, when Mlle. de Cardoville had her mind perfectly free, discussions extremely gay and animated took place, in which, in spite of his vein of mockery and scepticism, his lengthened experience and profound knowledge of men and things, and (let us

add) in spite of his *rouerie de bonne compagnie*, M. de Montbron had not always the best of the debate, and he acknowledged his defeat with the gayest good humour. Thus, that we may give some idea of the disagreements between the count and Adrienne, he had, before he became, as he said, her accomplice, always opposed (from other motives than those alleged by Madame de Saint-Dizier) her desire to live alone and as she chose, whilst, on the contrary, Rodin, assigning to the motives of the young girl on this point a certain degree of greatness, had acquired a certain influence over her.

The Comte de Montbron, then turned sixty years of age, had been one of the most brilliant men of the Directory, the Consulate, and the Empire; his extravagance, his *bons-mots*, his wit, his duels, his loves, his losses at play, had constantly occupied the society of the age in which he lived. As to his disposition, his heart, and his habits, we will add that he had continued always on terms of the closest friendship with all his old mistresses. At the time when we present him to the reader, he was still a high and a lucky player; he had, as they used to say, a very aristocratic look, a decided manner, yet clever and somewhat sarcastic; his habits were those of the best society, with a sort of impertinent raillery, when he did not like his company; he was very tall and thin, and still graceful in his figure, and moreover youthful; his forehead was high and bald; his hair white and short; his gray whiskers cut *en croissant;* his face was long; his nose aquiline; his blue eyes were very penetrating; and his teeth still in excellent preservation.

"M. le Comte de Montbron," said Georgette, opening the door.

The count entered and kissed Adrienne's hand with a kind of paternal familiarity.

"Now, then," said M. de Montbron to himself, "let us try and discover the truth I have come to learn, in order to prevent what may else perchance be a great calamity."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE CONFESSION.

Unwilling to expose the violence of the feelings by which she was agitated, Mlle. de Cardoville received M. de Montbron with a forced appearance of excessive gaiety, while he, on his part, spite of his perfect self-possession, found himself somewhat at a loss how to commence the subject he was desirous of discussing with Adrienne, and therefore resolved (as it is commonly called) to feel his way before entering upon the serious conversation he intended to hold with her. After looking fixedly at his fair companion for some seconds, M. de Montbron shook his head, and said, with a half mournful sigh:

"My dear child, I do not feel perfectly happy."

"What is the matter with you, my dear count?" said Adrienne, smiling; "are you suffering from headache? or does fortune frown just now?"

"Mine is, indeed, a pain in the heart!"

"Nay, nay, count! I cannot think it possible that the most skilful player in France should suffer more from the coolness of some adverse beauty than he would experience were the dice unpropitious."

"Still, my dear child, I have a sore pain at my heart, and, stranger still, it is on your account."

"Upon my word, my lord," said Adrienne, laughing, "you will make me quite vain."

"Indeed, my child, I have no expectation that what I am about to say will in any way excite your vanity, for,

in truth, I have to reproach you with neglecting your beauty. Look only at your pale, dejected, and careworn features, the melancholy which has hung about you for several days. I am sure, quite sure, all this has its origin in some secret source of grief."

"My dear M. de Montbron, your penetration is so justly acknowledged that you may be fairly allowed to err for once in your judgment without its affecting your well-earned reputation; and certainly you are greatly mistaken in thinking me either sad or troubled with any secret sorrow; and if I durst venture to speak what I think without fear of being styled vain and conceited, I should say I have never looked more captivating than I do at this present moment."

"And yet such is not your real opinion, but put into your head by some false and perfidious whisperer. Is this flattering friend a female?"

"No," replied Adrienne, with a slight emotion, "it was my own heart, which never deceives me!" Then added, "Understand — if you can."

"Do you mean by that to imply that you rejoice in the difference your features present to what they did a few days ago, because you are proud of the internal suffering which preys upon you?" inquired M. de Montbron, examining Adrienne attentively. "In that case, then, I was right. You have some hidden grief. I am the more determined upon maintaining this assertion, because it affords me equal pain with yourself."

"Then, once for all, my kind friend, let me beseech you to banish such an idea from your mind, for it is impossible for any one to be more happy than myself. The simple thought that I am free — yes, at my age, wholly free and unfettered — is alone sufficient to preserve my beauty from fading or my spirits from failing."

"Yes, you are indeed free to torment yourself, — free to be wretched how and in what manner you think fit."

"Come, come, dear count," said Adrienne, "we shall

begin our old habit of disputing over again. I begin to find you out, and to set you down as the ally of my aunt and the Abbé d'Aigrigny."

"I? Yes, certainly; much after the fashion that the Republicans are the allies of the Legitimists, they affect to be on friendly terms the better to compass each other's destruction. But, apropos of your detestable aunt, I heard that for the last few days a sort of conclave has been held at her house, that considerable agitation has been evinced by the various members of it, — in fact, that it may be looked upon as a sort of peculiar commotion. Ah, your aunt is travelling a nice road!"

"What else can be expected from one whose life has presented such completely opposite tastes? There was a time when she was ambitious of enacting the part of the Goddess of Reason, now she seeks to be canonised as a saint. And wherefore should she not attain her wish, since she has well qualified herself to be admitted into the Saints' Calendar under the title of Ste. Magdalen?"

"Say what you will of her, my dear child, it can never be more severe than she deserves; however, though certainly for very opposite reasons, I always was of her opinion as regarded your fancy for living alone."

"I know you were."

"And because I wish to see you a thousand times more free in every respect than you are at this moment, I advise you, faithfully and conscientiously —"

"To marry!"

"To be sure I would; and in that case, your dear liberty, with all its consequences, would belong, not to Mlle. de Cardoville, but to Madame — whatever you please; for we should have found you an excellent husband, who would have been responsible for your independence."

"And pray," said Adrienne, smiling, "who would have been responsible for this contemptible husband?

And what woman would degrade herself so far as to accept a name, laughed at and ridiculed by all? Not I, certainly!" continued the fair speaker, a little agitated. "No, no, my dear count; I alone will be answerable for my actions, whether right or wrong, and to my name shall be affixed the praise or blame of my words and opinions, for it would be as impossible to cast dishonour on the name of another as it would be for me to bear that name, unless it were surrounded with universal respect and esteem. Now, as I can answer for my own determination, never, by word or thought, to sully the name I received from my ancestors, and cannot possibly undertake for my husband (had I one) being equally tenacious of the purity of his, why, I prefer to remain as I am, — Adrienne de Cardoville."

"No living creature ever indulged in such ideas!"

"You say so," answered Adrienne, smiling, "because I object to the sight of a poor young girl being tied for life to some disagreeable, selfish individual — to barter her youth, her smiles, her freshness, for the dull privilege of being called his better half — ah, the very notion makes me feel pettish! As well might a charming rose be obliged to become the better half of an ugly thistle! Come, come, dear count," said Adrienne, bursting into a laugh, "you must confess there is nothing very tempting in this conjugal metempsychosis!"

The false gaiety and feverish excitement of Adrienne contrasted so strikingly with the paleness and suffering depicted in her countenance, it was so easy to perceive that all these forced spirits were merely intended to drown some internal grief, that M. de Montbron found himself deeply touched by the melancholy sight. Still concealing his emotion, he appeared, for a short space, to be deeply reflecting, and mechanically took up one of the books recently purchased and cut open, by which Adrienne was surrounded. After casting a hasty glance over it, he said, while striving to dissimulate the painful

ideas awakened by the forced mirth of Mlle. de Cardoville:

"You terrible madcap! Well, let us have one more attempt to prove my case. Suppose, now, that I were only twenty years of age, and that you were to do me the honour of espousing me, you would then be styled Madame de Montbron, I suppose?"

"Perhaps I should."

"How do you mean perhaps? Why, if you were my wife, do you mean to say you would not bear my name?"

"My dear count," replied Adrienne, smiling sweetly, "cease to pursue a hypothesis which leaves me only regrets."

All at once M. de Montbron made a sudden start, and surveyed Mlle. de Cardoville with an expression of profound surprise. During his conversation with Adrienne the count had mechanically taken up the different volumes scattered about on the sofa on which they were both seated, and, with an equally natural action, had vaguely cast his eyes over their contents. The first book he opened bore for its title, "Modern History of India;" the second, "Travels in India;" the third, "Letters on India." More and more surprised, M. de Montbron continued his investigation, and found this Indian nomenclature followed up by the fourth volume, "Excursions in India;" the fifth, "Remembrances of India;" the sixth, "Notes of a Traveller to the East Indies."

From hence arose an astonishment so great, and for several reasons so profoundly agitating, that M. de Montbron found it impossible to conceal from the penetrating eyes of Mlle. de Cardoville how deeply it affected him.

Adrienne, however, having totally forgotten the presence of the accusing volumes by which she was surrounded, and instigated by an involuntary feeling of petulance, blushed somewhat in displeasure at the fixed gaze with which her companion seemed trying to read

her innermost thoughts; then, resuming the usual frankness of her manner, she, in her turn, looked steadily in the face of M. de Montbron, and said, in the most natural manner possible:

"My dear count, what have you found to astonish you so greatly?"

But, instead of a direct reply to her question, the count appeared even more absorbed and earnest than before. While still contemplating the fair girl, he murmured forth, as if speaking to himself:

"No, no; it cannot be — it is impossible! And yet —"

"Would there be any objection to my knowing the subject of your monologue, my dear count?" said Adrienne, with a merry laugh.

"I beg your pardon, my child; but, in truth, my surprise has been too much for me at seeing —"

"Seeing what, I pray?"

"Such evident marks of your all-absorbing interest in whatever appertains to India," said M. de Montbron, slowly pronouncing his words, and fixing a penetrating glance on the features of Adrienne as he uttered them.

"Well, and what do you infer from that?" inquired Adrienne, boldly.

"I infer nothing; but I am lost in conjectures as to the cause of this sudden passion for matters you have hitherto cared nothing for."

"Oh, you wonder I should have so geographical a taste, and probably think it too grave a study for one of my age! But then, you know, my dear count, one must have some pursuit for her leisure hours; and besides, since I have been aware of my relationship to the half civilised Indian who writes himself my cousin and a petty prince, I have felt some curiosity to obtain an idea of the fortunate land which gave birth to my interesting, though savage, protégé."

These latter words were spoken with a bitterness that

struck M. de Montbron forcibly; still, therefore, continuing attentively to watch the expression of Adrienne's features, he merely replied:

"You appear to express yourself somewhat severely as regards the prince."

"Not at all; I speak with the utmost indifference."

"And yet he is deserving of a very different sentiment."

"Probably," answered Adrienne, coldly; "but it must be from a person of very different ideas to my own."

"He is so wretched," said M. de Montbron, in a tone of unfeigned sympathy; "I saw him two days ago, and really it grieved me to the heart to witness his misery!"

"And what have I to do with his sufferings?" exclaimed Adrienne, in a voice of painful impatience, almost amounting to anger.

"I should wish you, at least, to pity the torments he endures," replied the count, with a serious manner.

"Pity, and from me!" exclaimed Adrienne, with a look of offended pride; then, repressing her emotion, she said, coldly, "You are jesting, no doubt, M. de Montbron, when you ask me to take an interest in the love-sick torments of your pet prince?"

These last words of Adrienne were pronounced with a manner so freezingly contemptuous, while her pale and painfully contracted features betrayed so bitter a pride, that M. de Montbron said, sorrowfully:

"It is then true — too true; and I have not been deceived, I, who fancied that, from long years of faithful friendship, I had some claims on your confidence, have been kept in the dark, while you have unbosomed yourself to another, — this, I must confess, pains me deeply — severely!"

"I do not understand you, M. de Montbron."

"It is useless," continued the count, carried away by the violence of his feelings, "to employ any further concealment. I see, but too plainly, that there is no hope

left for my poor boy, — you love another!" And, seeing Adrienne start, as if taken by surprise, he continued: "Yes, yes; it is evidently so; your paleness, your melancholy for several days past, your invincible indifference to all that concerns the prince, abundantly prove that you love — "

Offended at the manner in which the count assumed a knowledge of her heart, she replied, with proud dignity:

"You are doubtless aware, M. de Montbron, that a secret surprised is not a confidence, and I must further add that your language greatly astonishes me."

"But, my dear girl, if I use the sad privilege of experience, if I divine, if I venture openly to speak of the state of your heart, if I even go so far as to find fault with you for having bestowed your affections, it is because the life or death of that poor young prince, whom you know I love and cherish as fondly as though he were my son, is involved in the matter. No one can be acquainted with my interesting protégé without feeling the most tender concern in all that refers to him; and from my heart I wish it had been otherwise, as regards the state of your affections!"

"It would be strange, indeed," replied Adrienne, with increased coldness, mingled with bitter irony, "if the bestowal of my love (even admitting that my heart entertained such a feeling) should have so strange an influence on Prince Djalma. What can it import to him whom I love?" added she, with a sort of disdain that was almost painful to witness.

"What does it matter to him?" rejoined the astonished count. "My dearest child, you must permit me to say that 'tis you who indulge in jests far too cruel! Why, when the wretched youth, loving you with all the wild ardour of a first passion, has been driven by despair twice to seek in death a termination to the torments he has undergone on your account, you appear astonished

that the fact of your loving another should become with him a question of life or death."

"Does he, then, love me?" asked the trembling girl, in a tone and manner impossible to describe.

"Does he? Ay, better than a hundred lives. I can answer for it; I have witnessed it."

Adrienne appeared almost stupefied at these words; a bright rush of blood suffused her before so pale countenance, then, quickly receding, left her paler than before, while her pale lips trembled as though with words she sought in vain to speak; then, placing her hand against her heart, she appeared as though essaying to stay its throbbing.

Terrified at the rapid change in the features of Adrienne, as well as at her alarming agitation, M. de Montbron approached her hastily, saying, "For Heaven's sake, my child, what is the matter?"

But, instead of making any reply, she merely waved her hand, as though to allay his fears, and soon, indeed, the apprehensions of the count were set at rest, for the lovely countenance, which had been a few minutes before contracted by disdain, irony, and grief, appeared suddenly lit up by the softest, sweetest emotions; the sensations she experienced were so ineffably delicious that it seemed as though she were unwilling to break the blessed spell by pronouncing a single word; then suddenly came the distressing suggestion that she might still be under the influence of some illusion or deceit, and, addressing M. de Montbron, she exclaimed, in a voice of agony:

"But you — you are not deceiving me. 'Tis true he loves me — is it not? Oh, speak and say so!"

"What I tell you?"

"Yes, yes — that Prince Djalma — "

"Loves you to distraction. Alas, 'tis but too true!"

"No, no," cried Adrienne, with the most enchanting simplicity, "it cannot be too true!"

"How?" exclaimed the count.

"But this female?" inquired Adrienne, as though the very question scorched her lips.

"What female?"

"She who was the cause of all his suffering."

"My child, I know of no other than yourself!"

"I? Oh, say that again,—say it was I only who occasioned all the agony the prince endured!"

"My beloved child, have confidence in me when I assure you that the prince has never felt a sigh for any one but yourself, and never have I witnessed a more sincere or touching passion."

"'Tis then true—his heart has never loved another than myself? Oh, say I am right! Speak, dear friend!"

"You are, indeed; you, and you alone, are the object of his soul's idolatry."

"Yet I was told—"

"By whom?"

"By M. Rodin."

"That Djalma—"

"That two days after our meeting the prince had fallen desperately in love with another, and that other utterly unworthy of him."

"M. Rodin told you so?" cried M. de Montbron, as though struck with some sudden idea. "Why, he it was who plunged a dagger in the heart of Djalma, by telling him that you were passionately in love with another."

"I?"

"Which threw the unhappy prince into the state of despair I have described."

"And it was my distress at learning that Djalma's love was not for me that produced the grief and melancholy you observed in me."

"But it seems that you return his passion even as warmly as he loves you," exclaimed M. de Montbron, in a transport of joy.

"Oh, do I not!" responded Mlle. de Cardoville, clasping her hands in a paroxysm of delight.

Some gentle taps at the door here interrupted Adrienne.

"Some of the servants, doubtless," said the count; "strive to collect yourself."

"Come in," said Adrienne, in a voice that betrayed her deep emotion.

Florine appeared.

"What is it?" inquired her mistress.

"M. Rodin has just been, but, fearing to disturb you, madame, he would not come in, but left word he would return in half an hour; will it be agreeable to you to receive him?"

"Yes, yes," said the count, to Florine; "and though I should still be with your young lady, show him in all the same. Shall it not be so?" inquired M. de Montbron, of Adrienne.

"Certainly," replied the happy girl, a gleam of indignation sparkling in her eyes at the recollection of Rodin's perfidy.

"The old villain!" exclaimed M. de Montbron, "I always suspected his stiff, starched, hypocritical demeanour; but he is now unmasked."

Florine quitted the room, leaving her mistress alone with M. de Montbron.

CHAPTER XXIX.

LOVE.

Mlle. de Cardoville's countenance was quite altered. For the first time her beauty shone forth in all its lustre, until now veiled by indifference or depressed by grief. A dazzling sunbeam suddenly lighted it up.

The slight irritation caused by Rodin's perfidy had passed like an imperceptible shadow across the young maiden's brow. Of what import were now these falsehoods — these treacheries? Were they not now unveiled?

And for the future, what human power could come between herself and Djalma, now so sure of each other? Who would dare to struggle against these two beings, so resolute and strong in the irresistible potency of their youth, love, and liberty? Who would dare to follow them into that warm sphere in which they, so handsome, so happy, were about to be united in lasting love, protected and defended by their happiness, an armour that was proof against all attacks?

Florine had scarcely gone out than Adrienne approached M. de Montbron with a rapid step. She seemed taller as she advanced, light, triumphant, and glowing. She was, indeed, a divinity walking on the clouds.

"When shall I see him?"

This was her first word to M. de Montbron.

"Why, to-morrow; he must be prepared for so much

happiness. A sudden and unexpected joy may be too terrible to a disposition so ardent."

Adrienne remained for a moment pensive; then she said suddenly:

"To-morrow — yes — not before to-morrow; I have a superstitious feeling in my heart."

"What is it?"

"You shall know. He loves me. This word expresses, includes everything, — comprises all, is all; and I have a thousand questions on my lips in reference to him, still I will not ask one before to-morrow. No; because, by a revered fatality, to-morrow is a sacred anniversary. From now till then I shall live an age; but I can wait. Look here!"

Then making a sign to M. de Montbron, she led him towards the Indian Bacchus.

"What a strong likeness!" she observed to the count.

"In truth," he said, "it is strange."

"Strange?" replied Adrienne, smiling, — "strange that a hero — that a demigod — that an ideal of beauty should resemble Djalma?"

"How you love him!" said Montbron, deeply moved, and almost dazzled at the happiness which shone in Adrienne's countenance.

"I must have suffered a good deal; must I not?" she said, after a moment's silence.

"If I had not decided on coming here to-day without any assignable reason, what would have happened?"

"I do not know. I should have died, perhaps, for I am smitten here (and she put her hand upon her heart), incurably. But what would have been my death will now be my life."

"Horrible to think of!" said the count, with a shudder; "a passion concentrated like yours, and as proud as you are —"

"Yes, proud, but not disdainful; and thus on learning his love for another, and learning that the impression

which I believed I had made on him at our first meeting was instantly effaced, I had renounced all hope without being able to renounce my love; and instead of flying from my memory, I surrounded myself with all that could recall it. When happiness is lost, there is still a bitter joy in suffering from those we love."

"I can now understand your Indian library."

Adrienne, without any reply, went to the stand, whence she took one of the newly cut open books with an expression of joy and happiness.

"Yes, I am very proud. Look, read that! Read it aloud, I beg of you. I repeat, I can wait until to-morrow."

And with the tip of her beautiful finger she pointed out a passage to the count, in the book which she presented to him.

She then went and, as it were, concealed herself on her causeuse; and then, in an attitude profoundly attentive and listening, with her body leaning forwards, and her hands crossed on the cushion, her chin leaning on her hand, her large eyes fixed with a kind of admiration on the Indian Bacchus in front of her, she seemed in this impassioned depth of contemplation to prepare to listen to M. de Montbron's reading.

He, very much surprised, began, after having looked at Adrienne, who said to him, in the softest and sweetest tone possible, "And very slowly, I entreat of you."

M. de Montbron read the following extract from the journal of a traveller in India:

"'When I was in India, at Bombay, in 1829, they were talking in all English societies of a young hero, son of —'"

The count paused for a second at the barbarous pronunciation of the name of Djalma's father. Adrienne said, quickly, in a soft tone, "Son of Kadja-Sing."

"What a memory!" said the count, with a smile.

And he continued:

"'A young hero, son of Kadja-Sing, King of Mundi. On his return from a distant and bloody expedition in the mountains against this Indian king, Colonel Drake was full of enthusiasm and respect for this son of Kadja-Sing, called Djalma. Hardly out of boyhood, this young prince, in a deadly war, displayed such chivalric intrepidity, such a noble character, that they surnamed his father the Father of the Generous.'

"How very touching," said the count, "is the custom of thus recompensing the sire in giving him a surname glorious for the son — it is noble! But how singular that you should fall in with this book!" added the count, with surprise. "I can easily comprehend that it is enough to excite even the coldest brain."

"Oh, you will see — you will see!" said Adrienne.

The count continued reading:

"'Colonel Drake, one of the bravest and best soldiers in the British army, told me yesterday that, being dangerously wounded and taken prisoner by Prince Djalma, after a desperate resistance, he had been taken to the camp, which was in the village of —'"

Here the same hesitation came over the count at meeting with a name even more difficult than the former; and not willing to make the attempt even to pronounce it, he interrupted himself, and said to Adrienne:

"Ah, as for this, I must really give it up!"

"And yet it is very easy," replied Adrienne; and with inexpressible sweetness she pronounced the following name, which is, really, very soft, "In the village of Shumshabad."

"This is an infallible mnemonic process for remembering geographical names," said the count. And he continued:

"'Once arrived at the camp, Colonel Drake received the most kind hospitality, and Prince Djalma watched over him like a son. It was then that the colonel became acquainted with certain facts, which raised his

enthusiasm for Prince Djalma to the hightest pitch. He related to me the following circumstances:

"'In one of the battles the prince was attended by a young Indian, about twelve years of age, to whom he was tenderly attached, and who was his page, following him on horseback, bearing his spare weapons. This boy was idolised by his mother, who, at the moment when the expedition set out, had confided her boy to Prince Djalma, saying to him, with a stoicism worthy of antiquity, "Let him be your brother!" "He shall be my brother," was the prince's reply. In the midst of a sanguinary rout the child was severely wounded, and his horse was killed. The prince, at the peril of his life, and in spite of the hurry of a precipitate retreat, rescued him, took him up behind him and then dashed off; they were pursued, and their horse wounded, but still he struggled on to a clump of jungles, in the midst of which, after several vain efforts, he fell exhausted. The child was incapable of proceeding, and the prince, taking him up in his arms, plunged with him into the thickest of the jungle. The English came up and searched the thicket, but the two escaped. After walking for a day and a night with forced march, countermarches, stratagems, fatigues, and unheard-of perils, the prince, still carrying the child, one of whose legs was severely injured, reached the camp of his father, when he only said, "I promised his mother that he should be my brother, and I have acted as a brother."'

"It is admirable!" exclaimed the count.

"Continue, pray continue," said Adrienne, dropping a tear, without taking her eyes from the bas-relief which she continued to contemplate with increasing love.

The count read on:

"'Another time Prince Djalma, followed by two black slaves, went before sunrise to a very wild spot to carry off two small tigers only a few days old. The den had been marked, the tiger and his mate were absent in search of food. One of the blacks entered the den by a

narrow opening, the other, with Djalma's aid, cut down with an axe a large trunk of a tree, in order to form a snare to take the tiger or his mate. On this side of the mouth the cave was almost perpendicular. The prince climbed up with agility, in order to lay the snare, with the help of the other black, when suddenly a frightful roaring was heard, and in half a dozen bounds the female, returning from her quest, reached the aperture of the den. The black who was laying the snare with the prince had his skull laid open by a bite; the tree fell across the narrow entrance of the cave, preventing the dam from entering, and at the same time barring the egress of the black, who was running out with the little cubs. Above, about twenty feet higher, on a platform formed by rocks, the prince, lying on his stomach, saw the fearful spectacle. The tigress, rendered furious by the cries of her young, was gnawing the black's hands, who, from the inside of the den, was endeavouring to keep hold of the trunk of the tree, which was his sole rampart, and was uttering dreadful cries.'

"It is horrible, indeed!" said the count.

"Oh, go on — go on!" exclaimed Adrienne, with excitement; "you will see what the heroism of goodness can do."

The count proceeded:

"'Suddenly the prince took his poniard between his teeth, tied his waist-belt to a point of the rock, took his hatchet in his hand, and with the other descended by the scarf, and alighted some paces from her, and, rapid as lightning, gave her two deadly stabs at the moment when the black, losing his strength, had let go the tree, and must have been torn to pieces.'"

"And you are astonished at the resemblance with this demigod, to whom even fable does not assign a devotion equally generous!" exclaimed the young girl, with increasing excitement.

"I am no longer surprised — I admire," said the count,

with a voice of emotion; "and at these two noble traits my heart beats with enthusiasm as if I were but twenty years old."

"And the noble heart of this traveller beats like yours at the recital," said Adrienne, "as you will see."

"'What makes the intrepidity of the prince the more admirable is, that, according to the principles of the Indian castes, a slave's life is of no importance. Thus a king's son, risking his life to preserve a poor creature so low in estimation, obeyed a heroic instinct of charity that was truly Christian, and hitherto unheard of in this country. Two such traits, as Colonel Drake very justly observed, are enough to depict the man, and it is with a sentiment of deep respect and extreme admiration, I, an unknown traveller, have written Prince Djalma's name in my book of travels, experiencing at the same time a sort of sorrow, when I ask myself what will be the future fate of this prince, lost in the depths of this wild country, now wholly devastated by war. How humble soever may be the tribute I pay to a character worthy of the heroic times, his name, at least, shall be repeated with generous enthusiasm by all hearts that can sympathise with what is generous and great.'"

"When I read these lines, so simple and so touching," replied Adrienne, "I could not help carrying the book to my lips."

"Yes, he is all I thought him," said the count, more and more moved, and returning the book to Adrienne, who rose gravely, and, also much affected, said to him:

"He is such as I would have you know him, in order that you may appreciate my adoration for him; for this courage, this heroic goodness, I had guessed from a conversation which I overheard, in spite of myself, before I appeared in his apartment. From that time I knew him to be as generous as he was brave, as tender, as exquisitely sensitive, as energetic and resolute; but when I saw him so gloriously handsome, and so different, by the noble

expression of his countenance, and even in his attire, from all I had ever before met with, — when I saw the impression which I made upon him, and which, perhaps, I experienced even more powerfully, I felt my life itself was bound up in this love."

"And what are now your plans?"

"Divine — as radiant as my heart. When he learns his happiness, I wish Djalma to experience the same bewilderment as I am smitten with, and which will not allow me yet to look my sun in the face — for I repeat to you, from hence till to-morrow will be an age to live! Yes, strange as it may appear, I had believed, after such a revelation, that I should have felt the want of remaining alone plunged in an ocean of overwhelming thoughts. But no, no; from now till to-morrow I dread my solitude; I feel an indescribable, feverish, disturbed, burning impatience! Oh, blessed be the fairy who, touching me with her wand, will put me to sleep from now till to-morrow!"

"I will be that benevolent fairy," said the count, smiling.

"You?"

"I."

"And in what way?"

"Behold the power of my wand. I wish to distract you from a portion of your thoughts, by making them materially visible to you."

"Pray thee explain."

"And moreover, my plan will have an additional advantage. Hear me; you are so happy, that you can listen to anything. Your odious aunt and her odious friends give out that your residence with Doctor Baleinier — "

"Was rendered necessary from my weakness of mind," said Adrienne, with a smile. "I expected that."

"Stupid as it is. But as your resolution to live alone creates for you those who envy and hate you, you know

wherefore there will not be wanting persons fully disposed to credit all that is said, however stupid."

"I hope so. To be taken for mad by fools is very flattering."

"Yes; but to prove to fools that they are fools, and that in the face of all Paris, is very amusing; and they are beginning to be uneasy at not seeing you. You have discontinued your usual drives out; my niece has been alone for a long time in our box at the Italian theatre. You wish to destroy, consume time until to-morrow, and now there is an excellent opportunity. It is two o'clock — at half past three my niece will call here in her carriage; it is a lovely day, and the Bois de Bologne will be crowded. You will have a delightful ride, and see all the world; then the air and locomotion will calm your fevered happiness, and this evening (now my magic begins) I will take you to India —"

"To India?"

"In the midst of one of those wild forests wherein we hear lions, panthers, and tigers roar. The heroic combat which just now so much excited you shall pass, fierce and terrible, beneath your eyes."

"Really, my dear count, this is a very pleasant jest."

"Not at all. I promise to show you real wild beasts, the redoubtable dwellers in the land of your demigod — growling tigers — roaring lions. Is not that better than your books?"

"But really —"

"Come, I see I must let you into the secret of my supernatural power. On your return from your drive, you shall dine with my niece, and we will go afterwards to see a very singular spectacle at the Porte St. Martin. A most wonderful tamer of wild beasts there exhibits animals perfectly ferocious in the midst of a forest (now the illusion begins), and feigns with them, tigers, lions, and panthers, the most desperate combats. All Paris

runs after these representations, and all Paris will see you there, more lovely, more charming than ever."

"Agreed, agreed," said Adrienne, with childish delight. "Yes, you are right; I shall experience a singular pleasure in seeing these fierce monsters, who will remind me of those my demigod so heroically fought. I agree, moreover, because for the first time in my life I ardently desire to be thought very handsome by all the world. I agree because —"

Mlle. de Cardoville was interrupted by a slight tap at the door, and then Florine entered to announce M. Rodin.

CHAPTER XXX.

EXECUTION.

Rodin entered. A rapid glance cast on Mlle. de Cardoville and M. de Montbron at once convinced him that he was in a difficult position. In truth, nothing could be less satisfactory to him than the looks of Adrienne and the count.

The latter, when he did not like a person, manifested, as we have already said, his antipathy by certain modes of aggressive impertinences, which had been, by the way, answered for and maintained in several duels; and now, at the sight of Rodin, his features suddenly assumed a contemptuous and harsh expression, and leaning his elbow on the mantelpiece as he conversed with Adrienne, he turned his head haughtily over his shoulder without taking any notice of the low bow of the Jesuit.

At the sight of this man, Mlle. de Cardoville felt herself almost surprised at not experiencing any feeling of irritation or hatred. The brilliant flame which was kindled in her bosom purified her heart from all feelings of vengeance. She smiled, on the contrary, for, casting a proud but tender look on the Indian Bacchus, and then at herself, she asked herself whether two beings so young, so handsome, so free, and so fond, could have, at this moment, anything to fear from this dirty old man, with mean and servile air, who approached her so crawlingly, like a wriggling reptile. In fact, far from feeling anger with or aversion to Rodin, the young lady experienced

only an increase of gay raillery, and her large eyes, already bright with bliss, now sparkled with malicious irony.

Rodin felt very ill at ease. The persons of his gown infinitely prefer violent enemies to mocking adversaries, sometimes escaping the ire loosened against them by falling on their knees, weeping, and groaning, and beating the breast, and sometimes, on the other hand, braving them audaciously, and showing an armed and implacable front; but before the biting satire they are soon disconcerted, and so was Rodin at this moment, who felt that, placed between Adrienne de Cardoville and M. de Montbron, he was about to pass what is vulgarly termed a rather uncomfortable quarter of an hour.

The count opened the fire, and looking over his shoulder, he said to Rodin:

"Ah — ah, here you are, Mr. Benevolence!"

"Come nearer, sir; come nearer, sir," said Adrienne, with a satirical smile, — "you, the pearl of friends, the model of philosophers — you, the declared foe of all roguery, all falsehood, I have a thousand compliments prepared for you."

"I accept everything from you, my dear young lady, even unmerited compliments," said the Jesuit, forcing a smile, and exposing thereby his horrid yellow and carious teeth; "but may I inquire how I have deserved these compliments?"

"Your penetration is usually very keen, sir," replied Adrienne.

"And I, sir," said the count, "I pay homage to your veracity, not less evident, or, perhaps, too evident."

"I penetrating — and in what, my dear young lady?" asked Rodin, with composure. "I veracious, and in what, Monsieur le Comte?" he added, turning around to M. de Montbron.

"In what, sir?" said Adrienne; "why, you have guessed a secret surrounded by difficulties and mysteries

without number, — in a word, you have contrived to read the very bottom of a woman's heart."

"I, my dear young lady?"

"You, sir, and you have cause to rejoice, — your penetration has produced the most happy results."

"And your veracity effected wonders," added the count.

"It is pleasant to the heart to act well even without knowing it," said Rodin, still keeping on the defensive, and looking askance at the count and Adrienne in turns; "but may I know for what I am now commended?"

"Gratitude compels me to inform you, sir," said Adrienne, satirically, "you have discovered, and disclosed to Prince Djalma, that I am passionately in love with some one. Well, laud your penetration — it is true!"

"You have discovered, and disclosed to mademoiselle, that the Prince Djalma was passionately in love with some one. Well, laud your veracity, my dear sir — it is true!"

Rodin was thunderstruck and silent.

"The some one whom I loved so passionately," said Adrienne, "is the prince."

"The some one whom the prince loves so passionately," added the count, "is mademoiselle."

These disclosures, so seriously disquieting, and made so unexpectedly, overwhelmed Rodin, who stood mute and alarmed as he reflected on the future.

"Can you now comprehend our gratitude towards you, sir?" said Adrienne, in a tone still more ironical. "Thanks to your sagacity, thanks to the deep interest you bear us, we, the prince and I, are indebted to you for being enlightened in our mutual sentiments towards each other."

The Jesuit resumed his *sang-froid*, and his assumed composure greatly annoyed M. de Montbron, who, but for Adrienne's presence, would have given quite another turn to the proceeding.

"There is some error," said Rodin, "in what you, my dear young lady, have done me the honour to communicate to me. Never in my life have I said a word in reference to the most suitable and, in every way, proper sentiment you entertain for Prince Djalma."

"Most true," interposed Adrienne; "and by a scruple of most exquisite discretion, when you were speaking to me of the intense love which the Prince Djalma experienced, you carried your reserve, your delicacy, to such a pitch, as to say that it was not me whom he loved."

"And the same scruple made you say to the prince that Mlle. de Cardoville was in love with some one, and that some one was not him."

"M. le Comte," said Rodin, dryly, "I have no occasion to tell you that I feel no particular inclination for mixing myself up in love-affairs."

"Really, what modesty or self-love!" said the count, rudely. "For your interest's sake, I pray you do not avow any such bad taste, for it might injure you if it were made public. You must, assuredly, be more careful with regard to the other small occupations you no doubt attend to."

"There is one, sir, at least," said Rodin, becoming as insulting as M. de Montbron himself, "for whose rude apprenticeship I am indebted to you, M. le Comte, and that is the onerous occupation of being your auditor."

"Ah, dear sir," retorted the count, disdainfully, "were you not aware that there are many ways of chastising rogues and impertinent fellows?"

"My dear count!" said Adrienne to M. de Montbron, in a tone of reproach.

Rodin replied with the utmost composure:

"I really do not see, M. le Comte, *primo*, that there is much courage in threatening and calling impertinent a poor old fellow like myself; *secundo* — "

"M. Rodin," said the count, interrupting the Jesuit,

"*primo*, a poor old fellow like you, who behaves shamefully, and then ensconces himself behind the old age which he dishonours, is at once a coward and a scoundrel, and deserves a double chastisement. *Secundo*, as to age, I do not know that hunters and *gens-d'armes* bow with any respect before the gray hides of old wolves, or the gray hairs of old knaves, — what think you, *cher monsieur?*"

Rodin, still unmoved, elevated his shrivelled eyelid, fixed for a moment his little reptile eye upon the count, darted at him a glance as chill and sharp as a dart, then the livid lid again fell in the dull eyeball of the corpse-faced old man.

"Not being an old wolf, and still less an old knave," replied Rodin, quietly, "you will allow me, M. le Comte, not to disturb myself unnecessarily as to the pursuits of wolf-hunters or *gens-d'armes;* as to the reproaches made to me, I have a very simple mode of reply, I do not say justification, for I never justify myself."

"Indeed!" said the count.

"Never!" replied Rodin, with perfect coolness; "my actions must do that for me. I shall therefore simply reply, that seeing the deep, violent, and really fearful impression caused on the prince by mademoiselle —"

"Let the assurance you now give me of the prince's love," said Adrienne, with an enchanting smile, and interrupting Rodin, "absolve you of the ill you sought to do me. The sight of our coming happiness shall be your sole punishment."

"It may chance that I have neither need of absolution nor of punishment, for, as I have had the honour to observe, my dear young lady, the future will justify my acts. Yes, I thought it right to say to the prince that you loved another person, and that person not himself, as I thought it also right to tell you that the prince loved another person, and that person was not yourself; and I believed, and believe, I was acting for your

mutual interest. My attachment to you may have misled me, possibly so; but after my past conduct to you, my dear young lady, I think I have a right to feel surprised at being thus treated. This is not a complaint; for if I never justify myself, still less do I ever complain."

"*Parbleu!* you grow heroic, my dear sir!" said the count. "You neither deign to complain, nor justify the ill you do."

"The ill I do?" and Rodin fixed his eyes steadfastly on the count. "Are we playing at riddles to-day?"

"What do you mean, sir?" exclaimed the count, with great indignation; "and what do you call it, when, by your falsehoods, you have plunged the prince into such fearful despair that he has twice attempted his life? What do you call it, when, by your falsehoods, you threw mademoiselle into so cruel and entire a mistake, that, but for the resolution I have taken to-day, this error would still have existed, and might have had the most fatal results?"

"And will you do me the honour, M. le Comte, to tell me what interest have I in these despairs, these errors, admitting for a moment that I have caused them?"

"A deep interest, unquestionably," said the count, sternly; "and the more dangerous, inasmuch as it is concealed; for you are of that number, I easily perceive, to whom the misfortunes and injuries of others bring both pleasure and profit."

"That would be too much, M. le Comte. I would content myself with the profit," said Rodin, with a bow.

"Your insolent coolness does not deceive me. This becomes very serious," continued the count; "it is unlikely that this perfidy is a solitary act. Who knows if this be not also one of the effects of Madame de Saint-Dizier's hatred to Mlle. de Cardoville?"

Adrienne had listened to this discussion with deep attention. Suddenly she started as if enlightened by a sudden revelation.

After a moment's silence, she said to Rodin, without severity, without anger, but with calmness, full of softness and serenity:

"They say, sir, that happy love effects prodigies. I should be inclined to believe it, for after some minutes' reflection, during which I have recalled certain circumstances, your whole conduct appears to me under a fresh aspect."

"What may be this new perspective, my dear young lady?"

"That you may have my view of the case, sir, allow me to recall a few facts. La Mayeux was utterly devoted to me, and had given me undeniable proofs of her attachment; her mind was worthy of her noble heart, but she felt towards you an invincible antipathy. All at once she disappears mysteriously from my house, and it has not been your fault that I have not entertained the most hateful suspicions of her. M. de Montbron has a paternal affection for me, but, I must own, very little sympathy towards you, and you have endeavoured to create a coolness between us. Then the Prince Djalma experiences a deep feeling for me, and you employ the most treacherous deceit to destroy that sentiment—what is your motive? I do not, cannot divine; but I am persuaded it is inimical to me."

"It would seem, mademoiselle," said Rodin, sternly, "that you add the forgetfulness of services rendered to your inability to explain my conduct."

"I will not deny, sir, that you released me from M. Baleinier's house; but then, in fact, in a few days more I should most certainly have been freed by M. de Montbron."

"You are right, my dear girl," said the count; "it is more than probable that he desired to acquire the merit

of what must soon have inevitably accrued, thanks to your best of friends."

"You were drowning, I save you — you are grateful to me? a mistake!" said Rodin, bitterly; "another passer-by would, doubtless, have saved you at a later period."

"The comparison is hardly correct," said Adrienne, with a smile; "a *maison de santé* is not a river; and, although I now think you, sir, a very likely person to swim between two streams, swimming was useless in this instance, and you only opened a door to me which must infallibly have been opened very soon."

"Capital, my dear child!" said the count, laughing heartily at Adrienne's reply.

"I know, sir, that your remarkable attentions are not confined to me alone. Marshal Simon's daughters were brought back to him by you, but who could credit that the researches and claims of the maréchal, Duc de Ligny, after his children, would have been in vain? You went so far as to restore to an old soldier his imperial cross, a real relic most sacred in his eyes, and it was a touching sight. You did, too, unmask the Abbé d'Aigrigny and M. Baleinier, but I had resolved on unmasking them myself; still, all this conspires to prove that you, sir, are a man of infinite ability."

"Ah, mademoiselle!" said Rodin, humbly.

"Full of resource and invention."

"Ah, mademoiselle!"

"And it is not my fault if, in our long conversation at M. Baleinier's, you evinced that superior mind which impressed me. Yes, I confess it, deeply impressed me, and which seems at this moment somewhat embarrassed. Ah, sir, it is very difficult for an uncommon mind like yours to keep its *incognito*. Still, as it is possible that by different paths — oh, very different!" added the young lady, with emphasis — "we are tending to the same end (according to our memorable conversation at M.

Baleinier's), I wish for the sake of our future communion (as you phrased it) to give you some advice, and to speak unreservedly to you."

Rodin had listened to Mlle. de Cardoville apparently unmoved, with his hat under his arm, his hands folded beneath his waistcoat, and twiddling his thumbs. The only exterior sign of the internal dismay he experienced at the calm language of Adrienne was that the livid eyelids of the Jesuit, hypocritically bent towards the ground, became more and more red, so violently did the blood suffuse them. Yet he replied to Mlle. de Cardoville, in a firm voice, and bowing profoundly:

"Good advice and frank language are always excellent things."

"Learn, sir," resumed Adrienne, with slight excitement, "that happy love gives such penetration, such energy, such courage, that perils are laughed at, snares detected, hatreds braved. Believe me, the divine light which beams around two loving hearts suffices to dissipate all darkness, to discover all stratagems. Mark me, in India — excuse my weakness, I love to talk of India," added the young maiden, with inexpressible grace and delicacy of manner — "in India, the travellers, in order to ensure their tranquillity during the night, light up a large fire around their ajoupa (excuse, also, this tinge of local colouring), and as far as the luminous beams extend, they drive away, by their brilliancy alone, all impure and venomous reptiles, whom the light startles, because they only exist in darkness."

"The application of the comparison does not yet appear to me," said Rodin, still twiddling his thumbs, and half raising his eyelids, still more and more suffused.

"I will speak more plainly," said Adrienne, smiling. "Suppose, sir, that the last service that you have rendered the prince and myself — for you only rely on services rendered — is very new and very skilful, I acknowledge it."

"Bravo, my dear child!" said the count, joyfully; "the execution will be complete."

"Oh, it is an execution, is it?" said Rodin, still not visibly moved.

"No, sir," replied Adrienne, smiling, "it is only a conversation between a simple young girl and an old philosopher — the friend of good. Suppose, then, that the many services you have rendered me and mine have suddenly opened my eyes, or rather," added the young lady, in a serious tone, "suppose that God, who gives a mother the instinct to defend her child, has given me, with my happiness, the instinct to preserve that happiness, and that some indefinable presentiment, now lighting up a thousand circumstances until now obscure, has suddenly revealed to me that, instead of being my friend, you are, perhaps, the most dangerous enemy of me and my family."

"So then we pass from execution to suppositions," said Rodin, as imperturbable as ever.

"And from supposition, sir, if it must be said, to certainty," replied Adrienne, with noble and calm dignity. "Yes, now I believe I have been for some time your dupe, and I say it, sir, without hatred or anger, but with regret. It is painful to see a man of your understanding, your mind, stoop to such machinations, and, after having set all the diabolical springs to work, to gain nothing but ridicule; for can anything be more ridiculous than for a man like you to be thwarted by a young girl, who has for her arms, her defence, her light — nothing but her love? In a word, sir, from this day forth, I consider you as an implacable and dangerous enemy, for I now perceive your aim, though I cannot divine the means by which you seek to attain it; but no doubt they will be worthy of the past. Well, in spite of all that, I do not fear you. From to-morrow, my family will be informed of all, and an active, unbroken, and resolved union will keep us all on our guard, for

unquestionably it concerns this enormous inheritance which has been so nearly snatched from us. Now what relations can exist between the wrongs with which I reproach you and the pecuniary gain which is hoped for? I am utterly ignorant of this; but you told me, yourself, that my enemies were so dangerously skilled, and their plots so crafty, that I must expect everything — foresee everything; I well recollect that instruction — I promised you to be frank, sir, and I believe I have kept my word."

"Frankness, supposing I were your enemy, would be most imprudent," said Rodin, still impassive; "but you also promised me some advice, my dear young lady."

"The advice shall be brief, — do not contend with me, because there is, and you know it, something even more powerful than you and yours; it is a woman who is defending her happiness."

Adrienne pronounced these last words with such sovereign confidence, her lovely face was radiant with such emboldened happiness, that Rodin, despite his phlegmatic audacity, was a moment dismayed. However, he betrayed no alarm, but after a moment's silence he said, with an air of pity that was almost disdainful:

"My dear young lady, we shall never meet again, in all human probability; but remember one thing which I repeat to you, — I never justify myself; I leave that to the future. Yes, my dear young lady, I am, in spite of everything, your most devoted servant," and he bowed humbly. "M. le Comte, my respectful duty to you," he added, bowing even lower to the Comte de Montbron, and then he left the room.

Scarcely was Rodin gone, than Adrienne ran to her desk, wrote a few words in haste, which she sealed and handed to M. de Montbron.

"I shall not see the prince before to-morrow, as much from superstition of heart as because it is necessary for my plans that this interview be attended with some cere-

mony. You shall know all; but I will write to him instantly, for, with such an enemy as M. Rodin, we must foresee everything."

"You are right, my dear child. The letter — quickly."

Adrienne gave it to him.

"I tell him enough to calm his grief, and not enough to deprive me of the delight and joy of the surprise I have in store for him to-morrow."

"This is all rational and affectionate, and I will hasten to the prince with your note. I shall not see him, for I could not answer for myself. But our ride and the play this evening, I suppose, are decided on?"

"Certainly; I feel quite a want of some relaxation till to-morrow. Then I feel the open air will do me good, for my conversation with M. Rodin has somewhat excited me."

"The old rascal! but we will talk of him by and by. I am off to the prince, and will return with Madame de Morinval, to accompany you to the Champs Elysées."

And the count hastily departed, as joyful now as he was unhappy and distressed when he entered the house.

END OF VOLUME IV.

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